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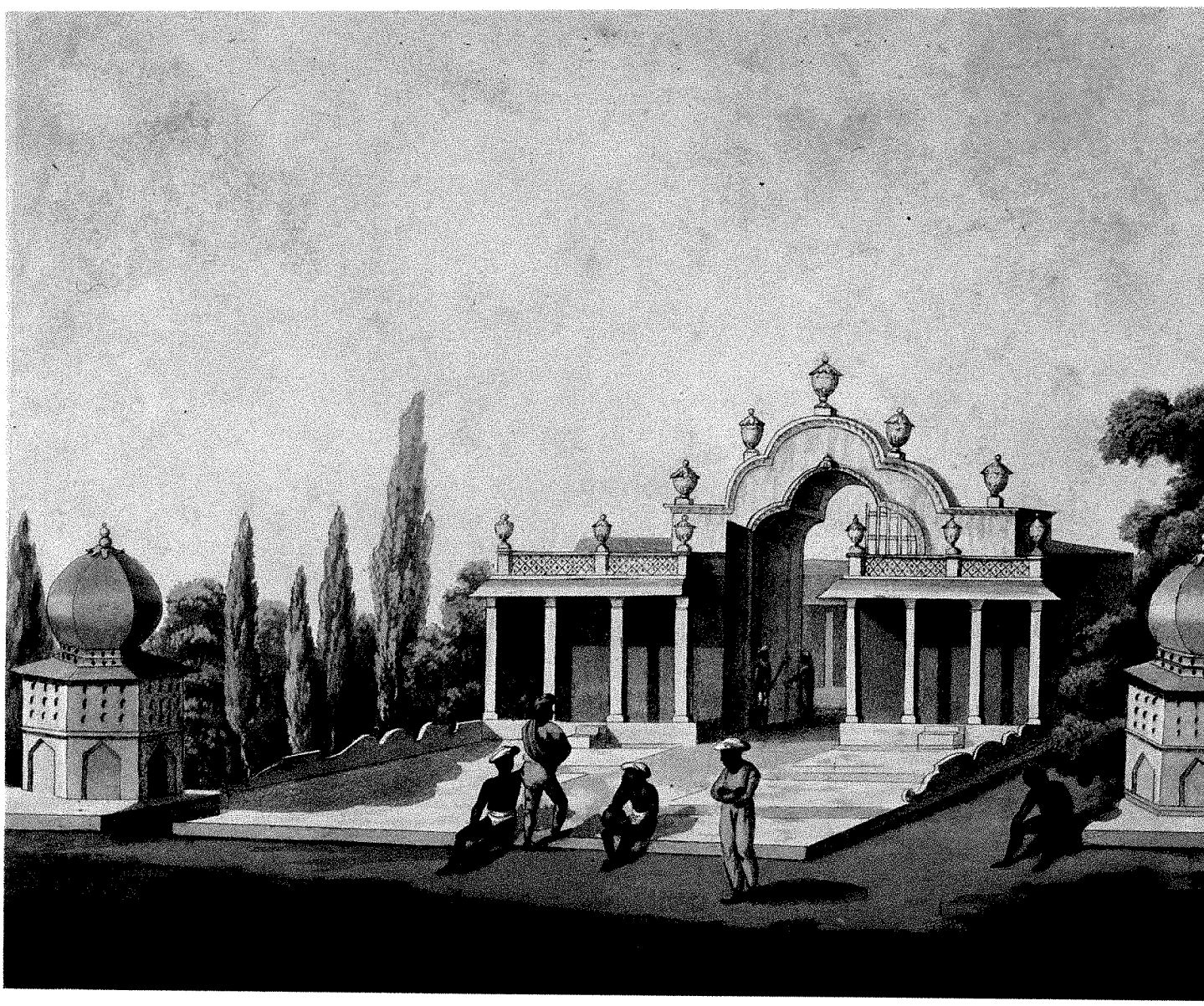

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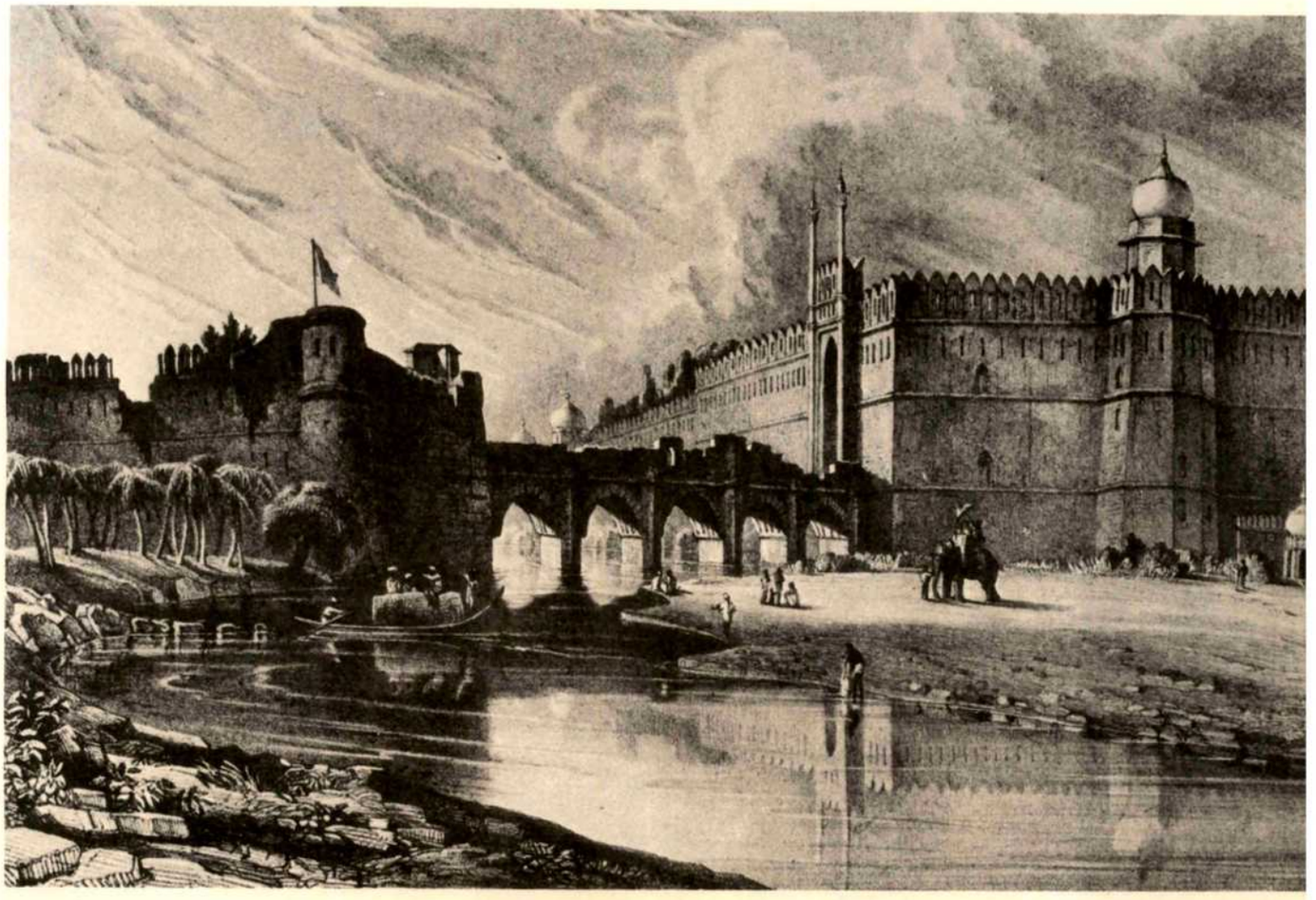

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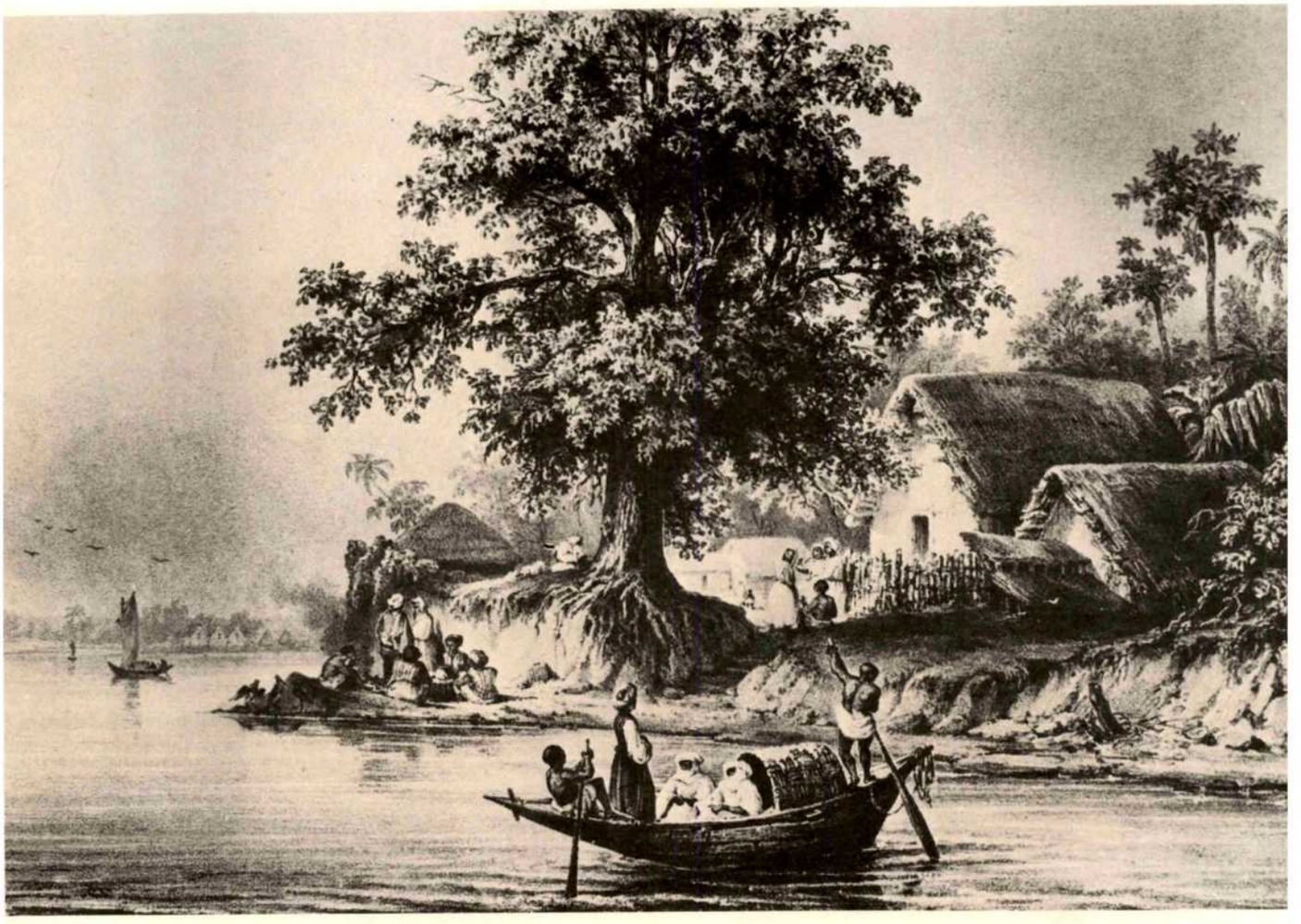

"Vue prise sur les bords de L'Hougly".
Tinted lithograph by Edmond Tudot after Fisquet from Auguste-Nicholas Valliant Voyage autour du Monde exécuté pendant les années 1836 et 1837 sur la Corvette La Bonite. *Published by Arthus Bertrand, Paris and by Ackermann & Co., 96 Strand, London, 1845-52.*
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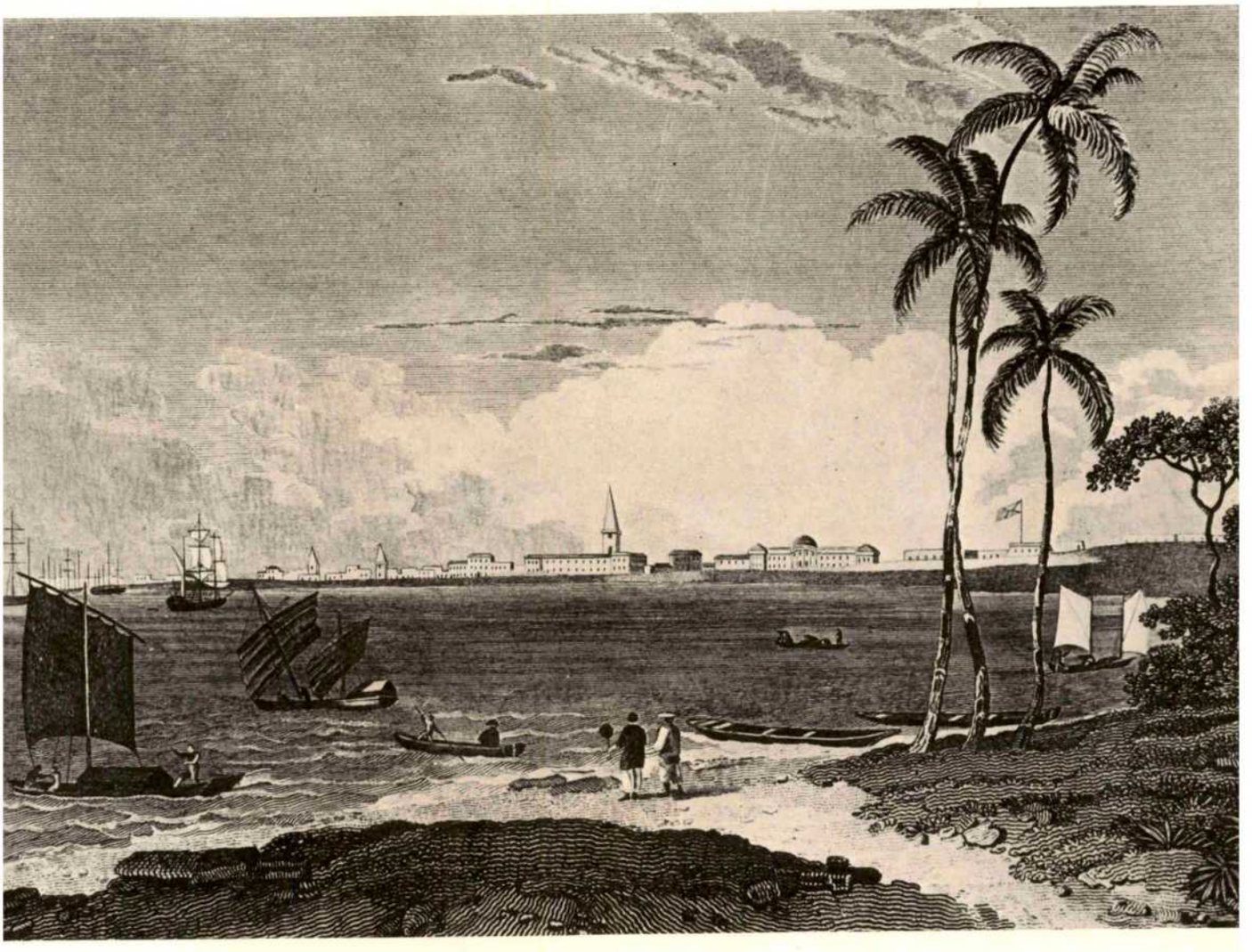

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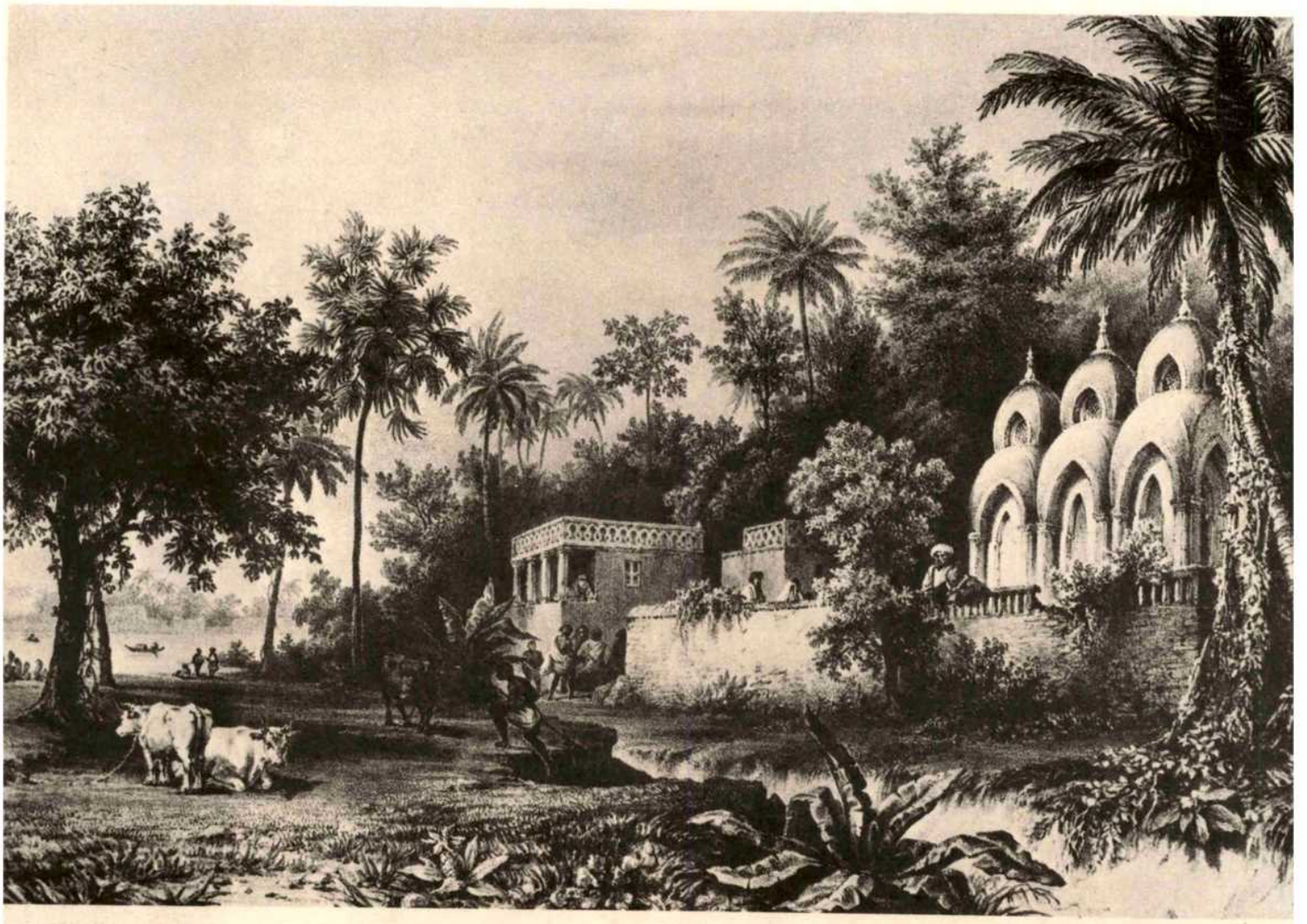

"Pagode de Dina Marlinga sur les bords de l'Hougly près Chandernagor".
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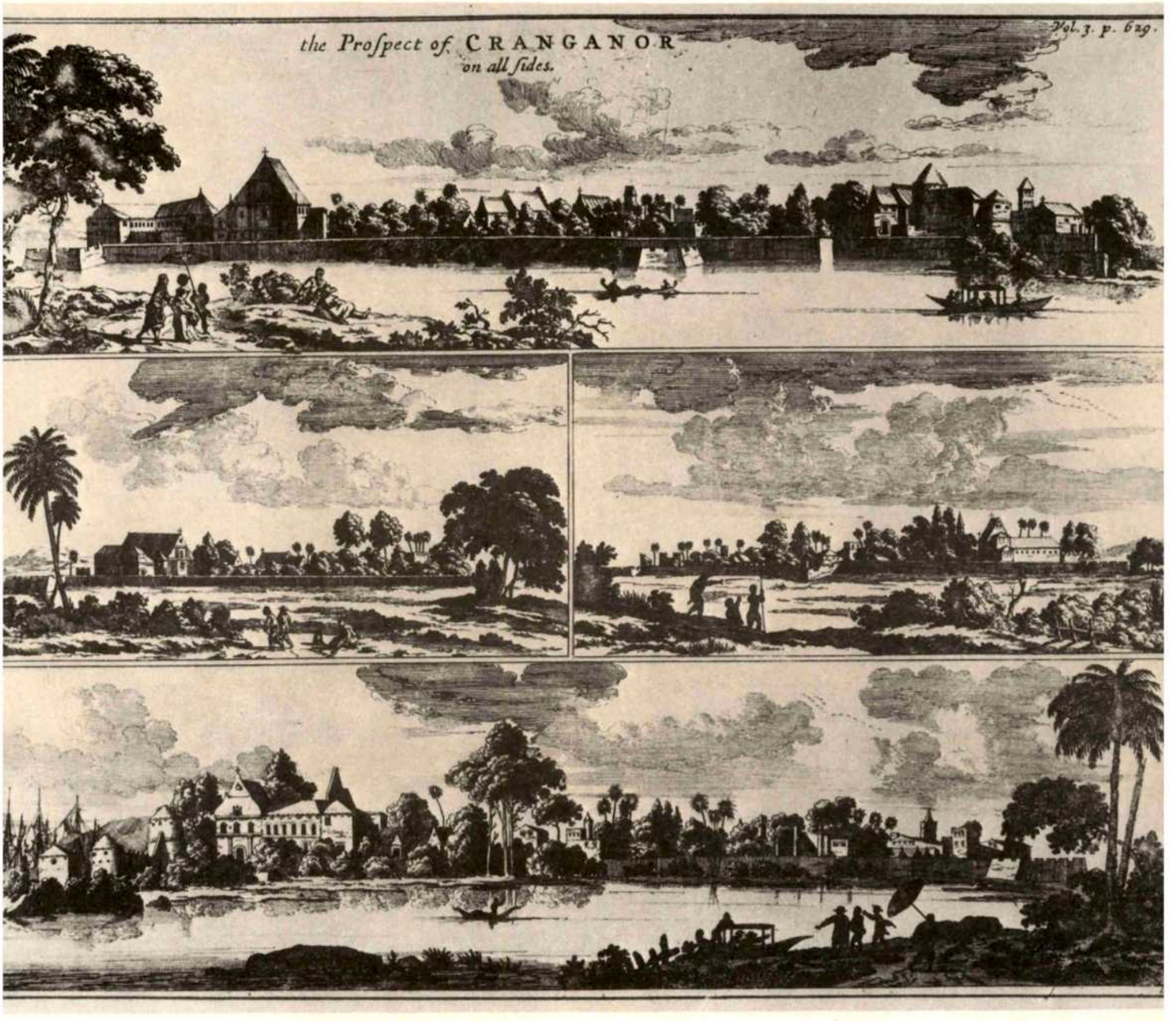

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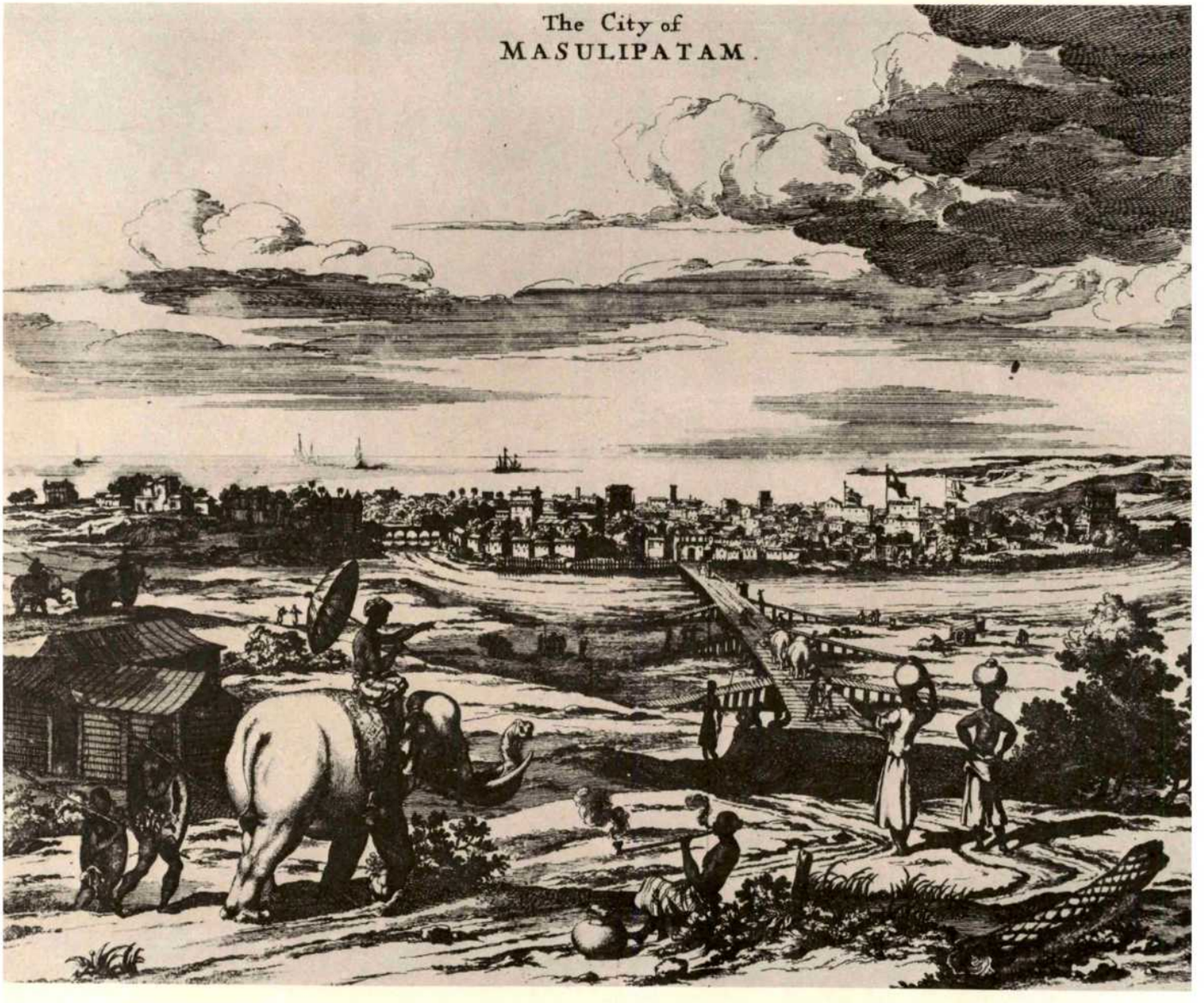

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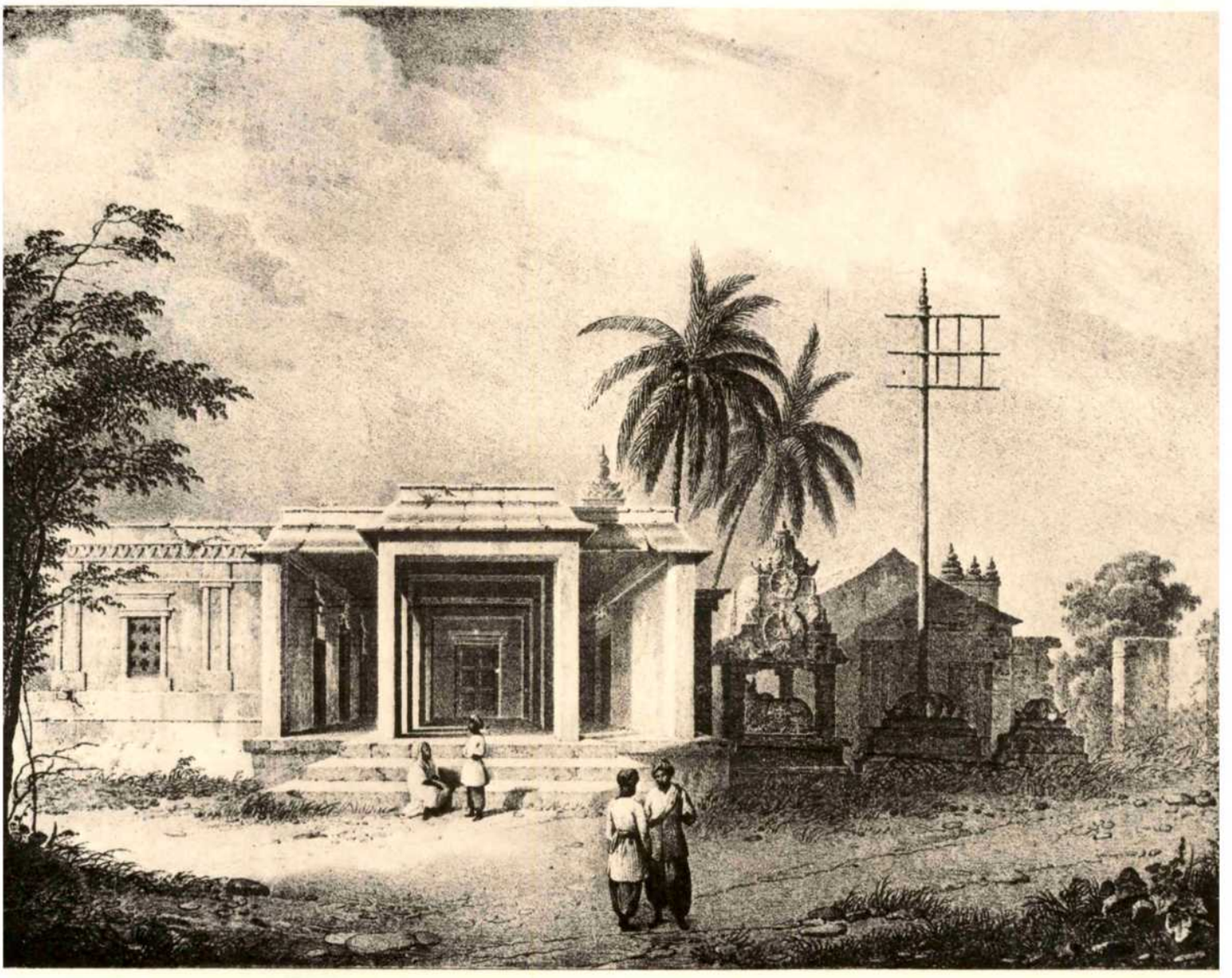

"Vue prise dans l'intérieur de la cour d'une Pagode à Pondichéry".
Uncoloured lithograph by Langlumé after Arnout from a sketch made by Comte Edmond Bigot de la Touanne from his Album pittoresque de la Frégete la Thétis et de la Corvette l'Espérance. *Published Paris, 1828.*
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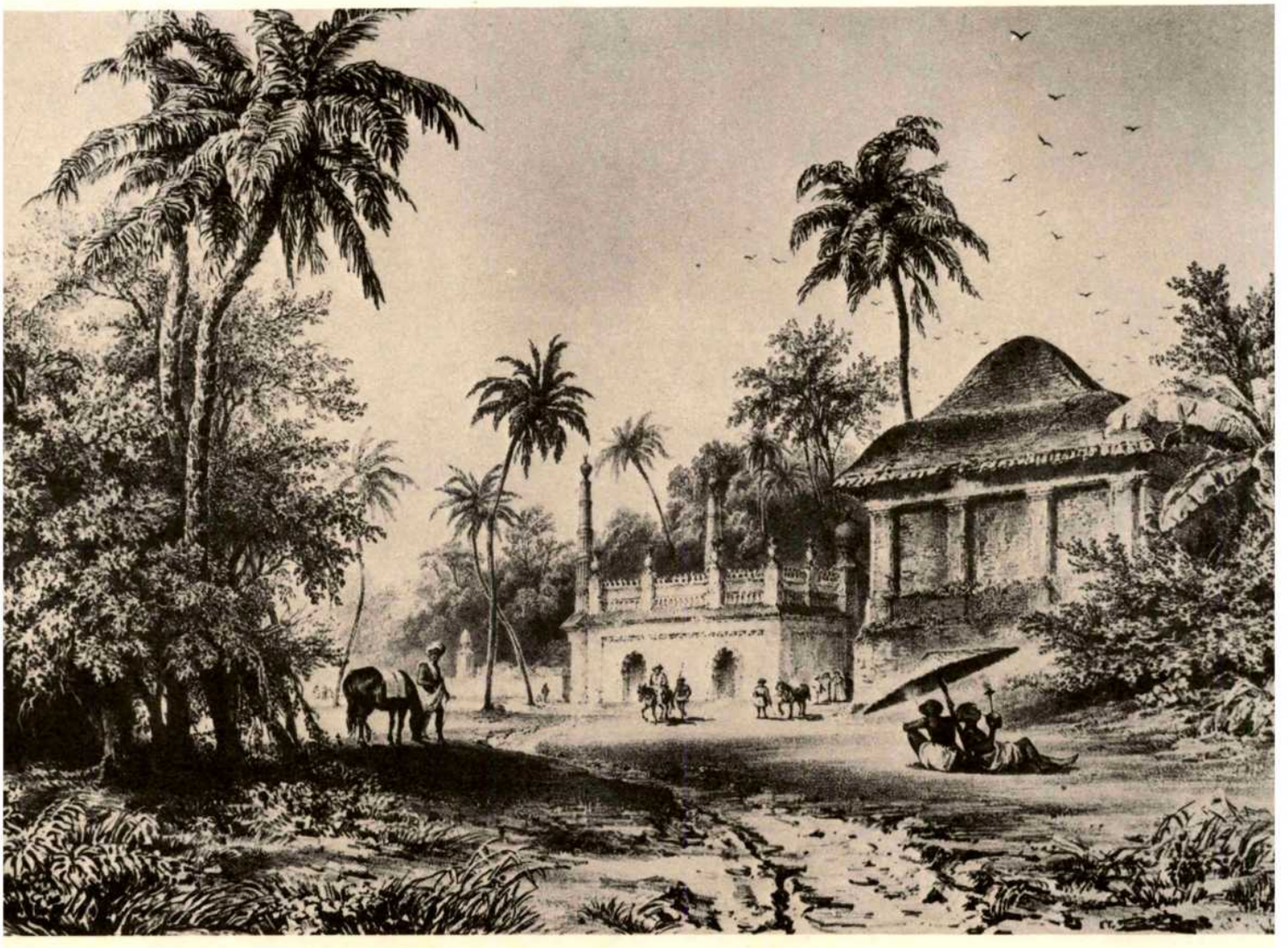

"Une Mosquee aux environs de Pondichéry".
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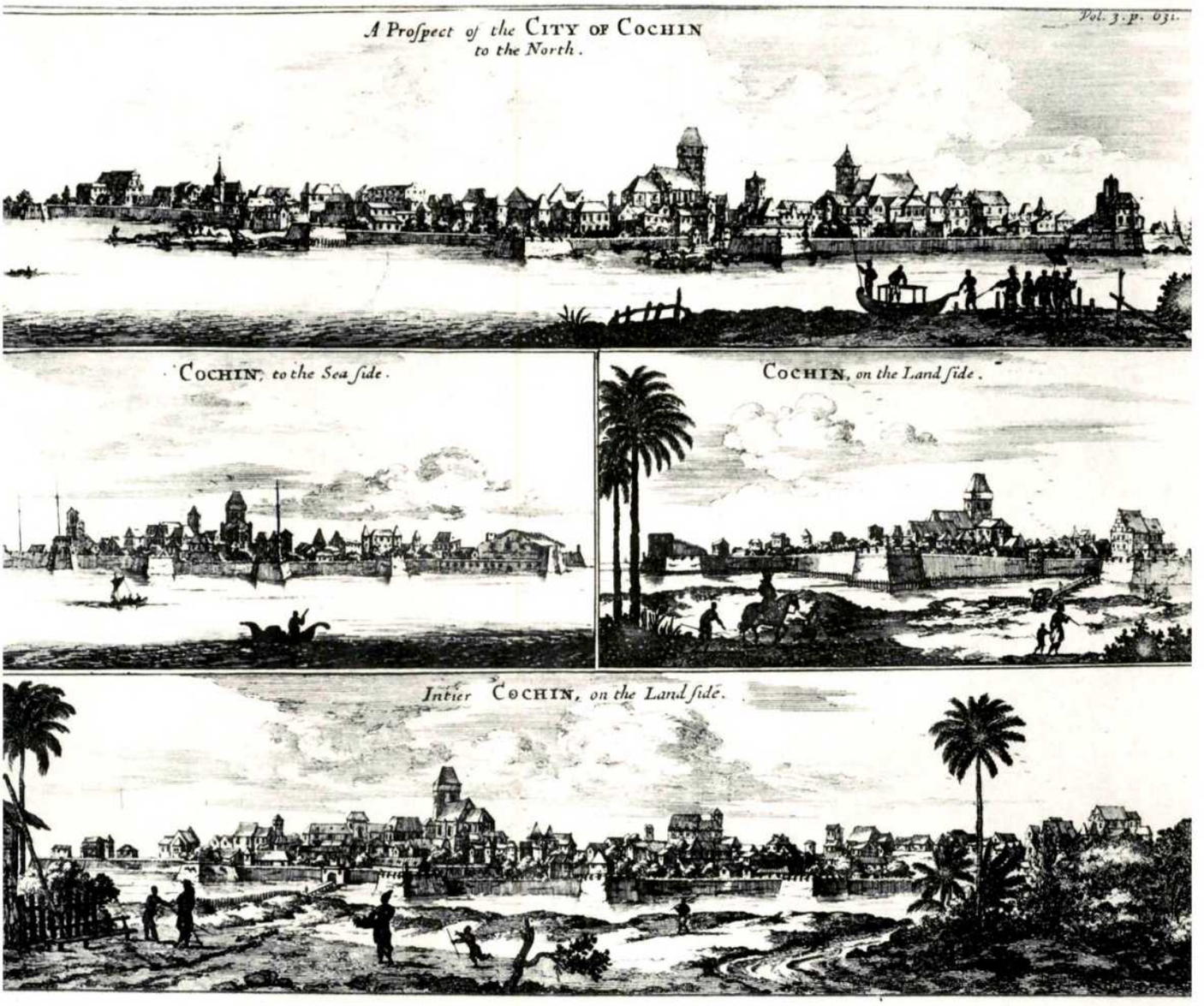

"A Prospect of the City of Cochin"
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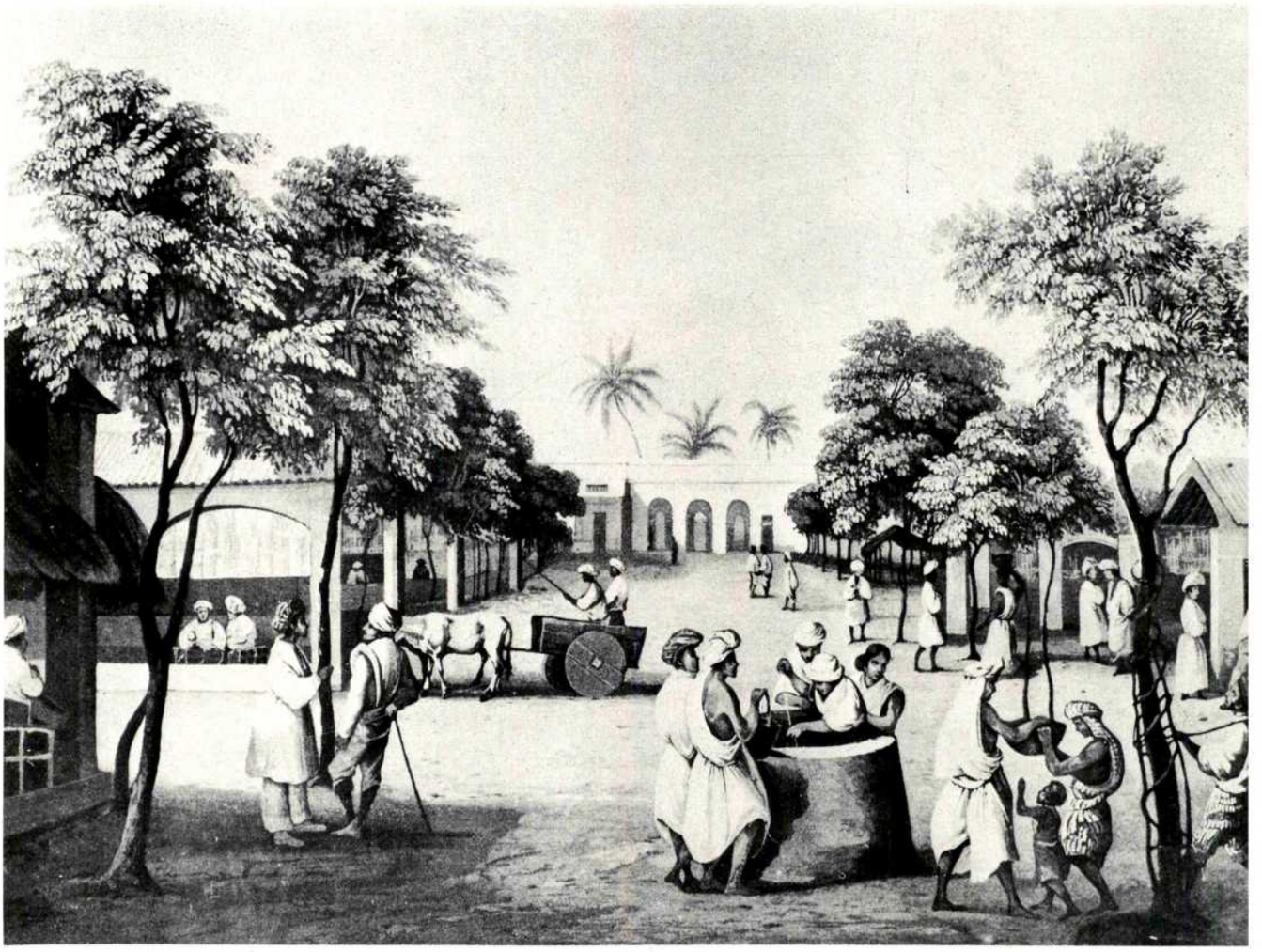

"Marché de Pondichery".
Uncoloured aquatint by Sigismund Himely after Edmond-François Pâris from C. Laplace
Voyage autour du Monde par les mers de l'Inde et de la Chine exécuté sur la Corvette de sa Majesté La Favorite. *Published by de Sainson, Paris, 1835.*
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India – A Portfolio of Prints
Officials, Customs and Animals

Volume XLI No. 1

A MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS

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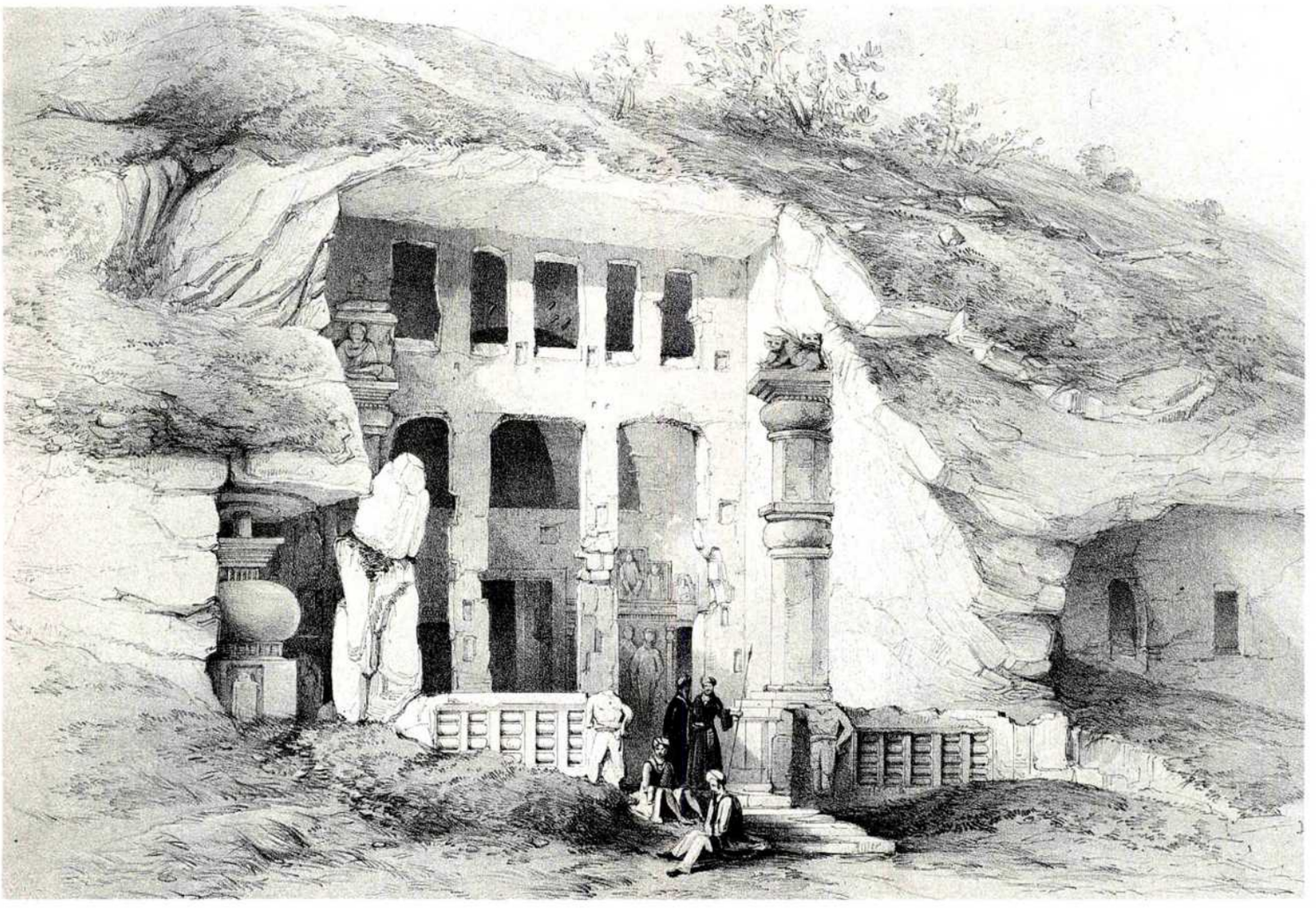


1. An archaeological study — Exterior of the great chaitya cave at Kanheri. Lithograph by Thomas C. Dibdin after a drawing by James Fergusson from the latter's Illustrations of the Rock-cut Temples of India. *London, 1845. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.*

INTRODUCTION

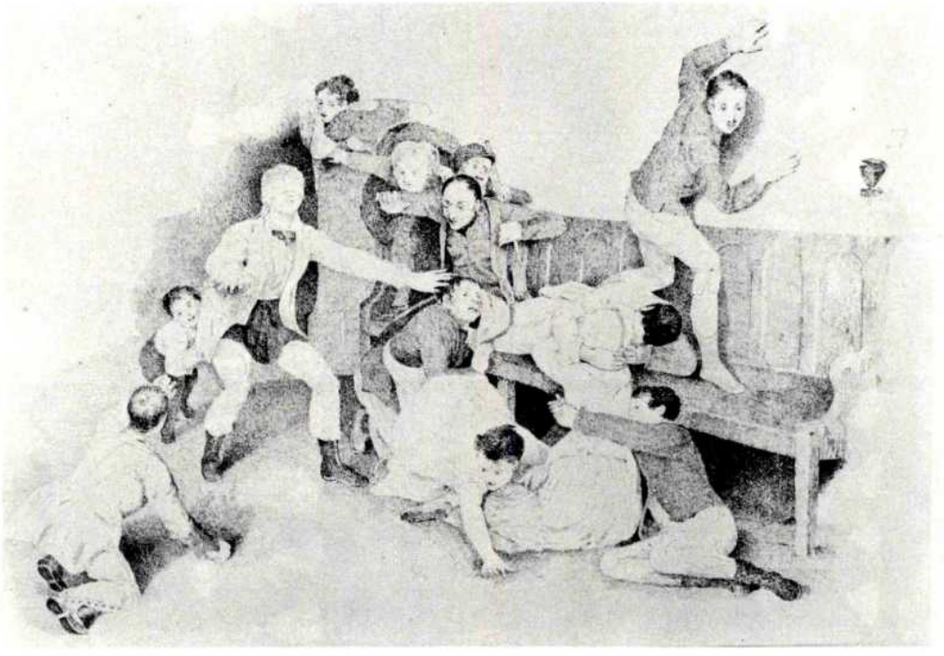
PAULINE ROHATGI AND PHEROZA GODREJ

To launch into the world of prints is like embarking on a never-ending voyage of discovery. Pictorially, the range of subjects is vast. It includes historical episodes, naval and military events, customs, costume, social life, caricature, natural history, field sports and portraiture. In addition, there are topographical views covering architecture and archaeology, besides scenic studies of mountains, rivers, waterfalls and coastlines. Printed maps and typography may also be included. As one delves further into the subject, the events that led to the production of a particular print, or indeed any form of printing, and the role of the people involved in this process, become increasingly fascinating. Knowledge of the circumstances leading to printing and publication and the reason why a particular print was issued (facts not always easy to ascertain), add greatly to its interest.

What is a Print?

By definition, a print is an image that has been produced by a technical means which enables it to be multiplied. Such techniques range from the simple lino or potato-cut, through the more complex hand processes of engraving and lithography, to the most sophisticated type of photomechanical colour printing invented to date. A distinction is normally made in the definition of a print, however, between the hand techniques and the photomechanical processes; the latter developed and generally replaced the former for commercial purposes from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards. Every print formed by one of the hand techniques is classified as an original. When the print was first published the particular subject portrayed was intended for a wide audience. Prints produced by the various new processes, resulting largely from the invention of photography, are usually described as reproductions.

In general, prints fall into three categories. They may be single items, part of a set or a series, or illustrations in a printed book or journal. For example, subjects such as portraits or historical events were often published singly. Prints depicting places, customs or natural history were frequently produced in sets, or as a series over a period of time. If the publication of a series was planned over a number of years, the prints were usually issued in parts; each part could contain several prints and be offered to subscribers in a folder or wrapper. The entire range of subjects is to be found among the book illustrations in the great wealth of literature, for example, on India dating from the seventeenth century onwards. Sometimes they simply enhance a narrative or provide a visual dimension to a particular passage in the text. In other cases, they form an integral part of the volume and may even be



2. A caricature—Blind man's buff.
Talc tracing by Sir Charles D'Oyly, c. 1824.
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the prime reason for its publication. Such books or folios generally have an introduction to the subject and a description accompanying each print.

The reasons for publication varied greatly. Prints were produced to extend knowledge. Many were issued for scientific, educational, political or commemorative purposes, while others were published simply to entertain and even amuse the spectator. In addition, a large number of prints was made solely for artistic reasons.

There are three basic techniques of printing: relief, intaglio and surface printing. The relief process follows the potato-cut principle whereby a print would be made as a result of inking the uncut surface areas. The image obviously appears laterally inverted. Woodcut and wood-engraving are typical of the relief technique.

The intaglio processes, all of which come under the general term of engraving, require a metal plate which, in the early days, was normally copper. The plate would be either cut into by hand or bitten into by acid. It was then inked for printing so that the ink penetrated the incisions. The surface of the plate was subsequently cleaned, with the result that when it was printed, the image represented the incised lines laterally inverted. Line-engraving, etching, mezzotint, stipple and aquatint are among the most common types of intaglio engraving.

Surface printing, as its title suggests, is the process of printing from a plane surface, such as a smooth stone, on which the image to be printed is ink-receptive and the blank area ink-repellent. In the case of lithography it is based on the principle that grease and water do not mix. The lithographic image is also laterally inverted during printing.

The print-making process usually began with a sketch or painting, although the end result in the form of a print was not always envisaged, or indeed intended, by the artist at the outset. The original drawing, as in the case of a landscape, would normally have been made on the spot or, as in the preliminary studies of flora or fauna, executed from a specimen. Proposals for publishing a particular subject could follow even many years after the original drawing had been made. This would take place once it was realized that the subject had a public appeal. It was often the case that a painting or sketch of a particular person, event or subject became specially significant or popular enough to merit circulation through the

3. A portrait—"Maharaja Mitrajit Singh Bahadur. Raja Tirhut Kya. C. W. Smith 1828. From an Original of Jeyram Das's Behar Lithy". Lithograph from an album compiled by Mrs. Jean Macnabb, c. 1830. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

print medium. The projected publication would frequently be announced in the press to attract subscribers.

Normally a water-colour drawing would be specially prepared, or worked up, for the graphic artist, from the original sketch or painting. He would then transfer the image on to the copper plate (if it was to be engraved) or on to the lithographic stone (if it was to be lithographed). This particular process needed considerable skill, and usually required a professional engraver or lithographer. As a result of this, numerous specialist print and publishing firms were established throughout Europe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many of them survived for several generations, and a few still exist today. Some of the original artists, however, also produced their own prints instead of employing professionals.

Prints of India

As far as India is concerned, prints made from sketches and paintings by European artists are of paramount importance. Their relevance may be appreciated further when one considers the differences in the stylistic traditions of Indian and European art. Although Indian miniature painters were keen observers of nature, the compositions of their paintings tended

to be conceptual. By contrast, European artists interpreted nature perceptually and one trend in the history of European art led to a high degree of realism using aerial perspective. This quality is also to be found in the prints. As a result, many prints may be valued as accurate visual records of the past. Those depicting topography might show places or buildings that no longer survive or that have altered beyond recognition. Social events, contemporary customs and portraiture are a few of the topics that reflect the spirit of this bygone age. In addition, the prints are often, in themselves, most attractive compositions and many are also fine examples of the particular technique of engraving or lithography by which they were produced. They frequently display characteristics of the art style then in vogue, such as the Picturesque which became popular in the latter part of the eighteenth century or the Romantic which developed somewhat later. Above all, prints of India reveal the tremendous interest on the part of European artists, in numerous visual aspects of the country. But, as one discovers while probing deeper into the subject, their interest went far beyond its purely pictorial features.

The early contacts between Europe and India were largely a result of voyages made for trading purposes. From the sixteenth century onwards, the Portuguese, Dutch, English, Danish and French gradually established trading settlements or factories mostly around coastal India. The Portuguese occupied the region of Goa and other parts along the west coast. Success in establishing an English factory at Surat (a port of the Mughal Empire), alongside those of other European countries, led the English East India Company to found other settlements during the course of the seventeenth century. The most important of these were Madras, Bombay and Calcutta.

Many of these Europeans developed specific interests and kept journals and accounts of their discoveries and travels in India. Some of their published works are embellished with woodcuts and engravings. Although many of the illustrations tend to be fanciful, since they were produced by print-makers who had never visited India, they nevertheless provide an invaluable source of visual information about these early days.

The expansion of the East India Company led to the appointment of an increasing number of civilians and military personnel, especially from the eighteenth century onwards. In addition, there were many free merchants and adventurers. As life in the Presidency capitals, especially in Calcutta and Madras, became more structured and settled, people became increasingly interested in acquiring pictures.

Professional portrait and landscape painters as well as a few professional engravers began to arrive in India, with permission from the East India Company, from about the 1760s onwards. Their intention was to make a living largely through patronage in India, and eventually to return to England.

A much larger group of British artists in India, however, may be classed as amateurs—men in civil or military employ and their wives, for whom sketching was an important pastime. There were also, for example in survey work, those who were required to make drawings of a variety of subjects as part of their official duties. Some of them also sketched in their leisure time. Many of the sketches and paintings by these professional, amateur and official artists were also published as prints. Some artists actually produced engravings or lithographs in India itself, and even set up private printing studios to do so. Lithographic presses were also established in the main cities by the Company. The majority of artists returned to England with their material and organized publication through a printing and publishing firm.

The heyday of artistic activity among British artists in India coincided with the golden age of engraving and lithography in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The outcome was a great wealth of printed images, some aspects of which are highlighted in this volume. These illustrated articles are based largely on the collections in the India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London. Their holdings comprise the largest and most comprehensive collection in existence, of prints relating to the Indian subcontinent.

1

A BOUNTIFUL ARK

RAY DESMOND

The classical world of Greece and Rome viewed India as a legendary land inhabited by extraordinary people and monstrous creatures such as gold-digging ants, said to be as large as dogs. The scholars who accompanied Alexander during his invasion of northern India, never doubted the belief that elephants carried their young for ten years and lived for three centuries or more. *Indica,* a collection of such myths and fables, written about 400 BC by a Greek physician, Ctesias, was treated as an authoritative work by many subsequent writers including Pliny the Elder in the first century AD. Even as late as the Middle Ages, European bestiaries could depict the tiger as a serpent or bird, so vague and contradictory were the accounts of its appearance. Tigers had been known to the citizens of Rome, for whose entertainment they were slaughtered along with other exotic animals in the arena, but it was not until the latter half of the fifteenth century that they were reintroduced to Europe.

Large and aggressive animals such as the tiger were difficult to transport over long distances. Birds, on the other hand, being small and relatively docile, were always being brought back to Europe by sailors and merchants. India's rose-ringed parakeet with its talent for mimicry, was a favourite cage bird with Roman families and Pliny mentions one that had even been taught to say "Hail Caesar". The peacocks so impressed Alexander that he made it an offence to kill them, while the medieval man had no such qualms and enjoyed eating the bird subtly flavoured with ginger.

One creature of Africa and Asia in particular dominated medieval and Renaissance art—the elephant. The illustrators of bestiaries, never having seen one, had to rely on often picturesque accounts and they invariably got its anatomy hopelessly wrong: cloven hoofs, tusks protruding at all angles and trunks looking like flexible trumpets. In their defence, it must be said that they were not too concerned about physical accuracy since, in their repertoire, animals were metaphors for moral concepts. The elephant, for instance, was a symbol of virtue.

King Manuel I of Portugal was proud of his stable of Indian elephants at Lisbon. He selected one as a present for Pope Leo X, no doubt hoping to impress the Pontiff with Portugal's imperial might. The animal embarked with its Indian mahout early in 1514 and arrived in Rome on March 12. It was the first live elephant to be seen there since the days of ancient Rome. It proceeded through the crowded streets to the Castel San Angelo, where the Pope was waiting to receive it. There it knelt before the Pontiff and then unexpectedly sprayed water from a bucket over the attendant cardinals. His Holiness was delighted. Hanno, as it was named, was housed in the Belvedere Gardens, the papal chamberlain was deputed to look after it and Raphael was commissioned to paint it.

The elephant was a challenging subject for the medieval artist, but when it came to depicting the rhinoceros, he just capitulated and was content to copy Albrecht Dürer's ubiquitous engraving. Here again, King Manuel of Portugal and Leo X feature together. Manuel had received a rhinoceros from the ruler of Gujarat in 1515 and decided that it made another suitable present for the Pope. It was sketched and described by a Portuguese artist before it left Portugal in December the same year, along with a splendid green velvet harness embroidered with flowers to wear during the presentation ceremony. The ship unfortunately sank in a storm off Genoa and when the body of the rhinoceros was retrieved from the sea, it was skilfully stuffed and continued on its journey to Rome.

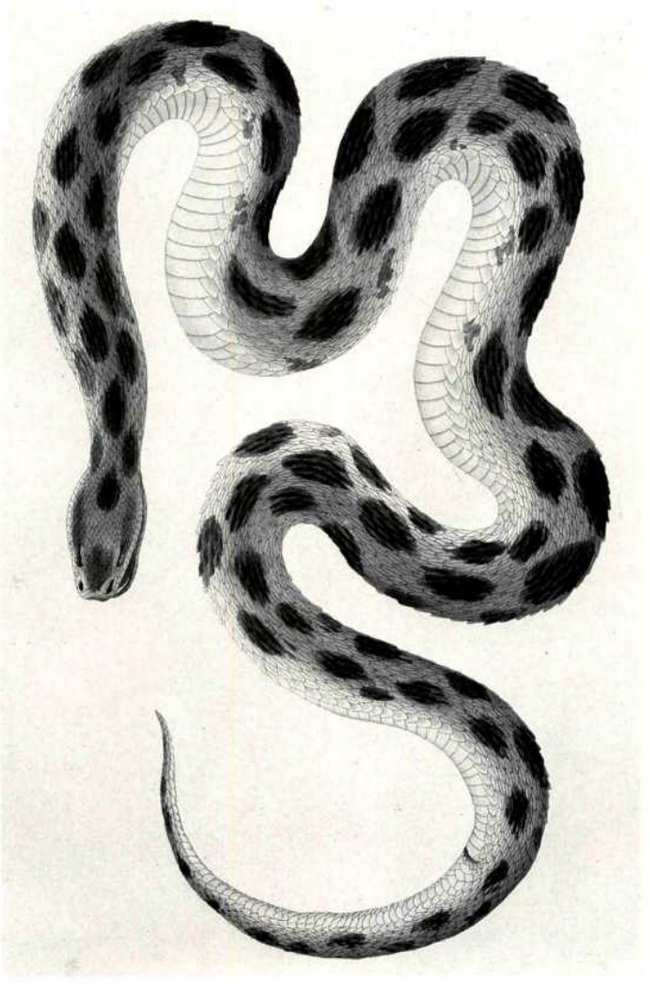
In the meanwhile, the Portuguese sketch and notes of the poor creature had been sent to Dürer in Nürnberg. With only these meagre details, he drew a commendable image of the rhinoceros, although inevitably there were errors: the folds of the flesh look like armour-plating embossed with a pattern of circles, overlapping scales cover its legs and it has acquired a fictitious dorsal horn. Yet Dürer succeeded in capturing the strength and monumentality of the animal. Although Dürer's contemporary, Hans Burgkmair, drew a slightly more accurate portrait of the rhinoceros, it was Dürer's woodcut that persisted as the model for the next two and a half centuries. It was engraved, sculpted in stone, metal and plaster, woven in tapestries and painted on Meissen and Chelsea porcelain.

The Mughal Emperor Babur had both a hunter's and a naturalist's respect for the rhinoceros, which he described as being "more ferocious than the elephant and cannot be made obedient and submissive." His great-grandson, Jahangir, inherited his interest in the natural world. Jahangir's artists, of whom Ustad Mansur was one of the most talented, were commanded to paint with meticulous care, any animal or bird that attracted his attention. Although modern Indian zoology began with British research, the pioneering contributions of Jahangir, especially in the field of animal behaviour, should not be overlooked.

The Asiatic Society of Bengal, founded in 1784 in Calcutta to study "The history and antiquities, the arts, sciences and literature of Asia" provided a forum for European naturalists in India. Its first president, Sir William Jones, preferred botany to zoology. In his presidential discourse in 1785, he disclosed that he "never could learn by what right, nor conceive with what feelings, a naturalist can occasion the misery of an innocent bird and leave its young, perhaps, to perish in a cold nest, because it has gay plumage and has never been accurately delineated, or deprive even a butterfly of its natural enjoyments." This reluctance to kill, even in the name of science, was later shared by the ornithologist, Allan Octavian Hume (who served in India), when he became a theosophist. With an army of collectors at his disposal, he had amassed an unrivalled collection of bird skins and eggs but on his conversion, he ordered his collectors to shoot no more birds.

Patrick Russell (1727-1805)

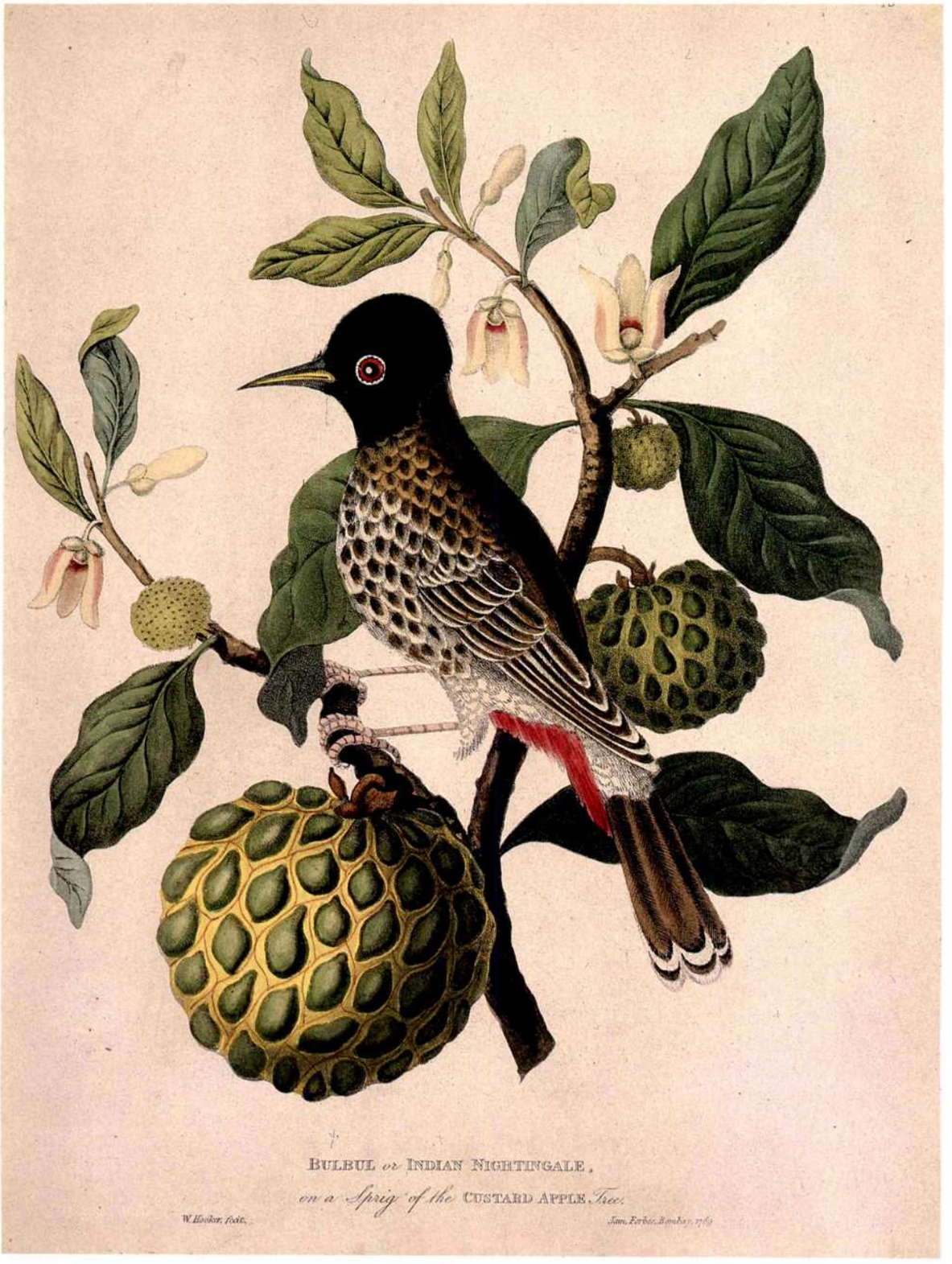
British naturalists in India were usually servants of the East India Company. Many of them were surgeons, like Patrick Russell who joined the medical service of the Company in 1781; four years later, he was appointed Naturalist in the Carnatic, where he distinguished himself as a herpetologist or student of snakes. It was, as he confessed in the preface to his *An account of Indian serpents, collected on the coast of Coromandel* (1796-1807), a neglected subject. "Few branches of the Natural History of the East Indies, have been less cultivated in the Company's establishments abroad, than that of Serpents. It must be acknowledged, that it offers no attractive allurements, and that



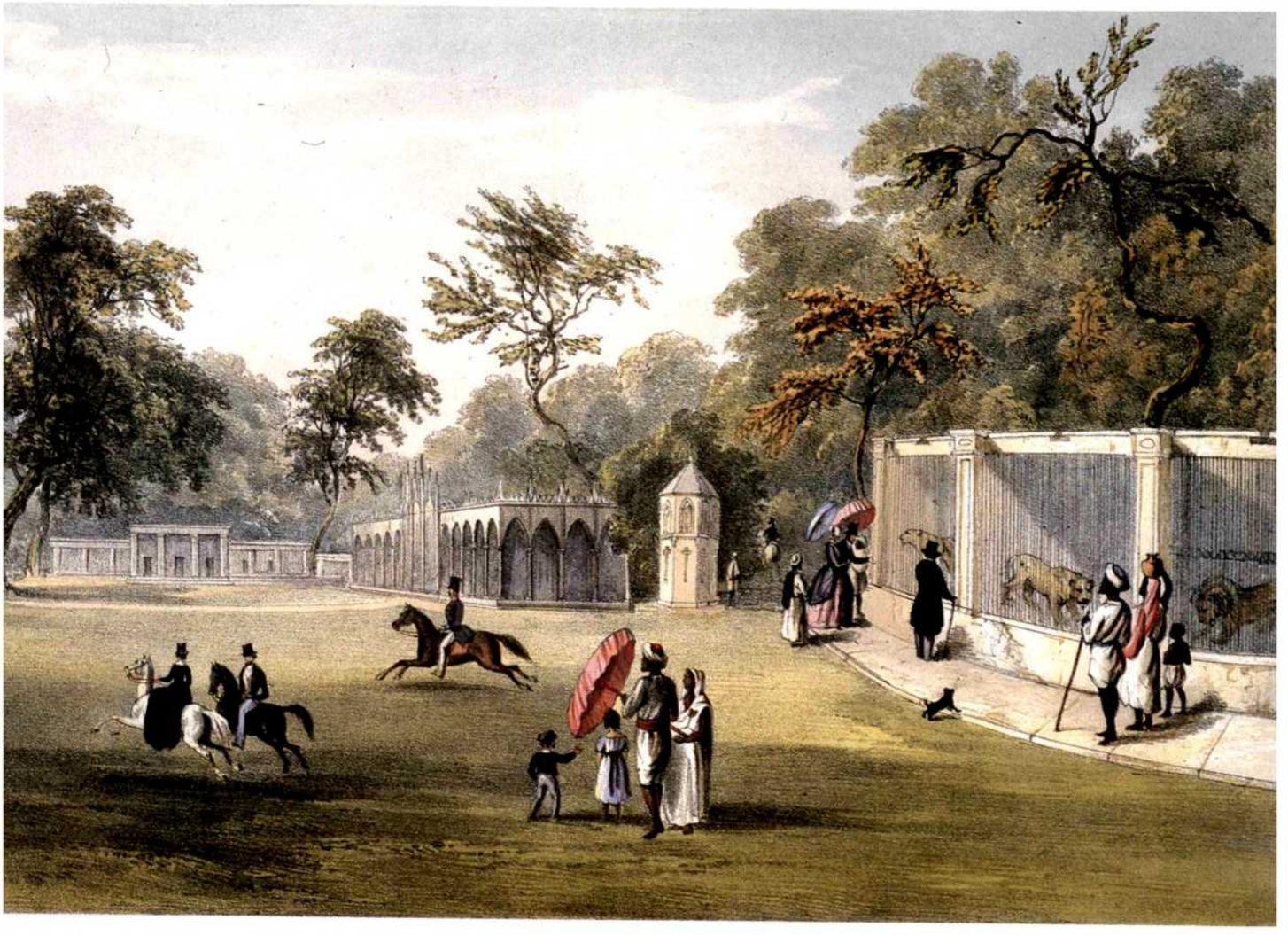
1. "Coluber".
Hand-coloured engraving from Patrick Russell's An account of Indian serpents, collected on the coast of Coromandel, *London, 1796-1807.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

those who, from other avocations, can only spare transient attention to the subjects of Natural History, are more likely to prefer objects less disgusting, and experiments accompanied with less cruelty, and personal danger . . . . The search for plants, for birds, or even insects, is comparatively [a] pastime or pleasurable occupation; but in the actual pursuit of the disgusting race of serpents, he stands in need of assistants who are not, at all times, to be procured." On his return to England, Russell described and supervised the making of the plates of this folio, which he had illustrated with crisp hand-coloured engravings of forty-three snakes, distinguishing for the first time in print, the harmless from the poisonous. *Fig. 1*

In another part of India, James Forbes, a civilian in the Bombay Presidency between 1766 and 1784, had been making meticulous observations and sketches of the flora and fauna that he encountered during his various postings. A digest of all this material was published in the four volumes of his *Oriental memoirs* in 1813. The natural history illustrations, mostly engraved in aquatint by William Hooker, are the finest in the volumes and they vividly convey Forbes' particular fascination with the subject. *Fig. 2*



2. "Bulbul or Indian Nightingale on a Sprig of the Custard Apple Tree".
Coloured aquatint engraving by William Hooker after James Forbes from the latter's Oriental memoirs, *London, 1813.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.



3. Menagerie at Barrackpore.
Colour lithograph by W. Robert Dickinson and Lowes Dickinson after Sir Charles D'Oyly from the latter's Views of Calcutta and its environs, *London, 1848.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

The Barrackpore Menagerie

The Governor-General, Lord Wellesley, convinced that the researches of competent naturalists like Patrick Russell should form part of an official programme, announced in 1804, the formation of an "institution for promoting the natural history of India." In June 1800, the acquisition of quadrupeds and birds had begun at Garden Reach, Calcutta for the proposed institution, which was to have formed part of the College of Fort William. The animals and birds were subsequently moved to a menagerie at *Fig. 3* Wellesley's country residence at Barrackpore some twenty-four kilometres north of Calcutta. In charge was Francis Buchanan, another surgeon who had made a reputation as a naturalist, with orders "to collect materials for a correct account of all the most remarkable quadrupeds and birds in the provinces subject to the British Government in India." The animals collected for this project were to be housed in cages at Barrackpore "until they shall have been described and drawn with that degree of

attention to minute distinctions which is so essentially necessary for the purpose of the natural historian." This was to have been the centre for a national survey of India's fauna, but with the departure of Lord Wellesley for England in 1805 and the Company's refusal to support this ambitious scheme, the menagerie was doomed. There were a few tigers and bears there when Maria Graham saw it in 1810, and when Lord Auckland was Governor-General, a rhinoceros roamed the grounds, startling unsuspecting visitors. Subsequently when the Calcutta Zoo was formed in 1876, the remnants of the Barrackpore menagerie were dispersed.

Visitors to Lucknow usually inspected the King of Oudh's well-stocked menagerie. Both Reginald Heber, Bishop of Calcutta, and Captain A.C. Lowe of the 16th (Queen's) Lancers were there in 1824. The Bishop was astonished to discover that its small herd of rhinoceroses were "gentle and quiet animals." The Captain's curiosity was attracted by a captive "wild man: he speaks no language, but makes a noise and looks like an idiot." He solemnly concluded, "I suspect this wild man is a humbug."

François Balthazar Solvyns

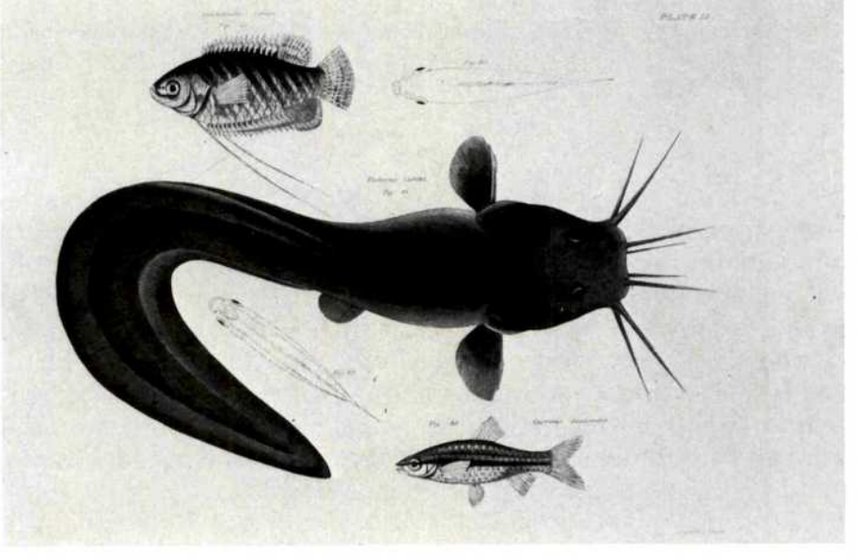
Fig. 4 One wonders whether the slim and rather elegant "Ourang-outang" with a benign smile, depicted by the Belgian artist, François Balthazar Solvyns in his *Les Hindous*, was yet another "wild man". This creature regularly begged for food at the kitchen door of a house in Bengal. According to Solvyns, "he was six or seven feet high, and when he got near us he stood erect, with the help of a stick, and began to cry out and make signs as if it were to ask for his usual pittance: he was let into the kitchen where they gave him a plate of rice and scraps of meat, which he eat sitting, without any signs of fear, muttering with a sort of satisfaction between his teeth." Solvyns' claim to "have spared neither time, nor pains, nor expence, to see and examine with my own eyes, and to delineate every object with the most minute accuracy" leads one to suspect his ability as an artist when one judges his attempt to draw an orang-utan. Although his drawings are undoubtedly naive, the work is still a *tour de force*; Solvyns etched the plates himself and it has been claimed that he even made the paper on which they were printed.

Solvyns was more successful in his portrayal of people. Animals and birds seldom oblige by adopting a suitable pose. Fish also present problems, as Francis Buchanan
Fig. 5 found out. The illustrations in his *An account of the fishes found in the River Ganges and its branches (1822)* are not coloured, for the same reason that persuaded Patrick Russell to have black and white engravings in his *Descriptions and figures of two hundred fishes, collected at Vizagapatam on the coast of Coromandel,* published in 1803: "In a hot climate, the colours of fish are more rapidly fugitive after death than serpents. They escape while the painter is adjusting his palette; and in the fine gradations from the most brilliant to the softer evanescent tints, nature through boundless variety, ever maintains a certain harmony and characteristic simplicity in her transitions, that required a delicate pencil under more masterly guidance than my artists had pretensions to."

Field Sports

The hunter as well as the naturalist enjoyed a special relationship with nature. For the Mughal emperors, hunting became a military exercise involving the deployment of a large circle of troops to advance on the trapped prey. Shikar for British officers

4. "Ourang-outang".
Hand-coloured etching with aquatint by and after François Balthazar Solvyns from his Les Hindous, *Paris, 1808-1812.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.



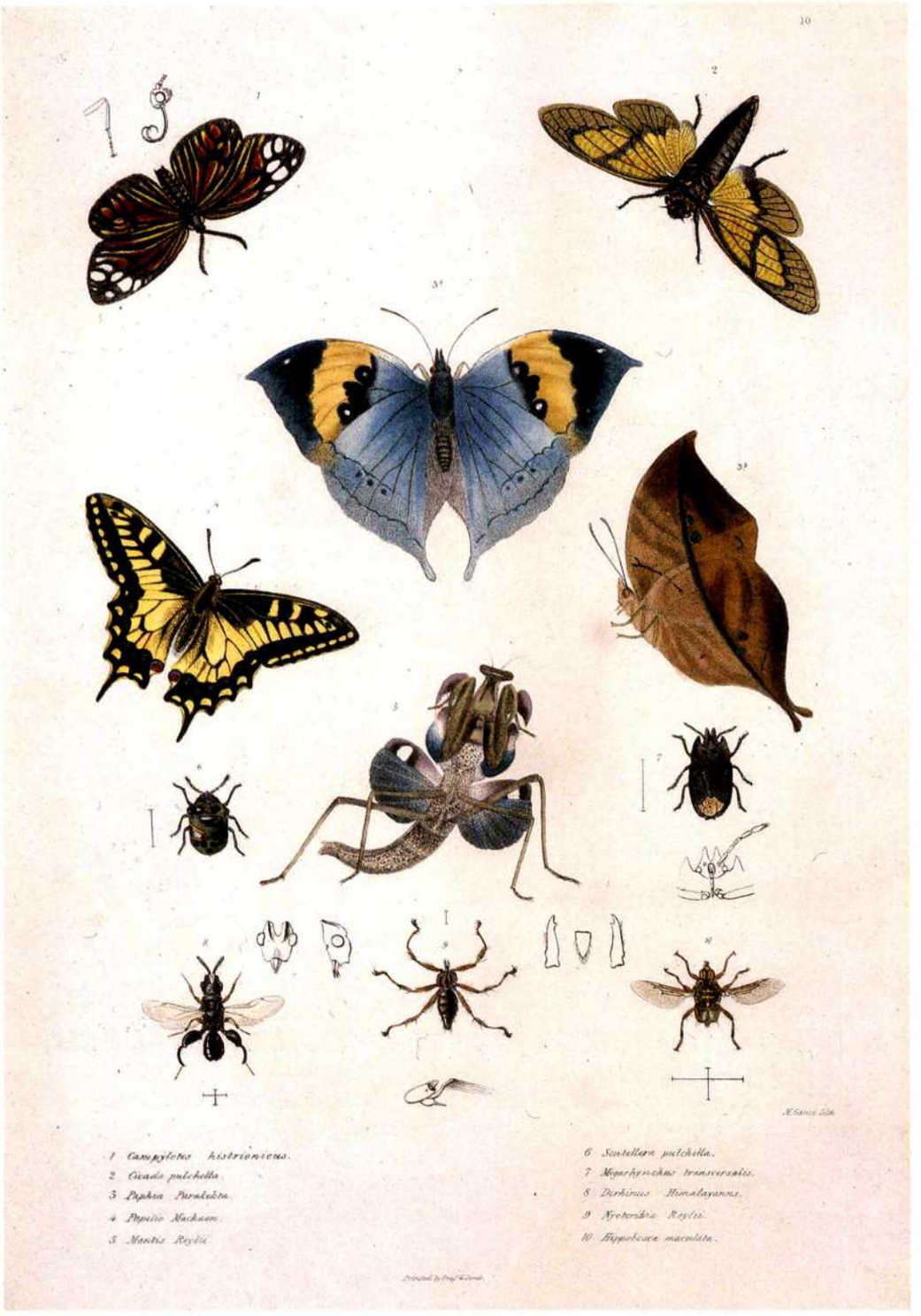
5. Plotosius canius and two other genera.
Aquatint and line-engraving by J. Swaine from Francis Buchanan's An account of the fishes found in the River Ganges, *Edinburgh, 1822.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

6. "A Rhinoceros bayed by elephants".
Coloured aquatint engraving by J. Clark after Samuel Howitt and Captain Thomas Williamson, from Oriental field sports, *London, 1805-1807.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

meant shooting snipe in the paddy fields, elephant, sambur and bison in the jungle, tiger, panther and pig in the woods, and bear, deer and wolf in scrubland. The abundance of game encouraged excessive slaughter. In the 1850s, a district officer in the Central Provinces bagged sixty tigers in just two years. Fortunately, many Europeans found their recreation in fox hunting, substituting the Indian jackal for the traditional fox. This sport and other hunting activities are depicted with splendid theatricality in forty coloured aquatint engravings by J. Clark in *Oriental field sports,* which were drawn by Samuel Howitt after water-colour sketches by Captain Thomas Williamson and published by Edward Orme in 1807-1808.

Fig. 6 One of the scenes in the book, "A rhinoceros bayed by elephants", is a vivid interpretation of the legendary hostility between these monumental creatures. Pliny the Elder recorded a contest in which a rhinoceros fatally stabbed an elephant in its side. It was said that King Manuel of Portugal sent his ill-fated rhinoceros to the Pope so that he could match it in a fight against his earlier gift, the elephant Hanno.

7. "Otus bengalensis".
Coloured lithograph by and after Elizabeth Gould from John Gould's A century of birds... from the Himalaya Mountains, *London, 1832.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.



8. A selection of butterflies and other insects.
Coloured lithograph by M. Gauci from John Forbes Royle's Illustrations of the botany ... of the Himalaya mountains and of the flora of Cashmere, *London, 1839.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

Although no one would doubt the mean temper and truculence of the rhinoceros, Thomas Williamson, nevertheless, cautioned his readers that "such an animal is by no means fit to be made a pet."

The Study of Birds

Probably no group of naturalists generates more communal enthusiasm than the bird-spotters who, at a moment's notice, will travel great distances in all weathers to observe some species that happens to be blown off course during its migratory flight. Even the responsibilities of managing the affairs of an empire did not deter some of the British in India from their ornithological pursuits. Edward Buckley, a surgeon at Fort St. George in Madras, sent descriptions and drawings of some twenty birds to England where they appeared in John Ray's *Synopsis avium et piscum* in 1713, one of the earliest published accounts to include Indian birds. More birds from the subcontinent featured in Eleazer Albin's *Natural history of birds* which appeared between 1731 and 1738, and George Edwards' *Natural history of uncommon birds* published from 1743 to 1751. When John Gideon Loten was Governor of Ceylon during the 1750s, he employed the talents of a resident Dutch artist to paint the island's birds. Thomas Pennant reproduced some of these in his *Indian zoology* of 1769.

Elizabeth Gwillim, whose husband became a judge in Madras in 1800, drew birds with great accuracy and affection, disdaining the contrived postures which were adopted by most bird artists of her day. She drew birds in their young, immature and adult stages, paying meticulous attention to the layering of their plumage. The wife of another judge, Lady Impey, had a small menagerie at Calcutta where her Indian artists drew birds in traditional static poses. The animation and drama of flight, however, were not attempted in print until John James Audubon published his *Birds of America* between 1827 and 1838. The plates of this celebrated work were mostly engraved by Robert Havell junior.

John Gould (1804-1881)

India's first spectacular bird book, John Gould's *A century of birds hitherto unfigured, from the Himalaya Mountains*, appeared about the same time. John Gould, who progressed from gardening through taxidermy to the superintendence of the ornithological collection of the Zoological Society of London, made his reputation and fortune with a series of bird books. His work on the Himalayas was the first in the series. His wife, Elizabeth, drew from actual bird skins and patiently lithographed *Fig. 7* each of the 102 illustrations in this book. After a succession of fine volumes on the birds of Australia and the partridges of America, and on toucans and humming birds, Gould returned to Indian species with his *Birds of Asia,* which was produced over thirty-three years from 1850 onwards. This work could never have been undertaken by him, however, without the benefit of the labours of and the collections made by other naturalists in India. The classificatory researches of Edward Blyth at the Asiatic Society's Museum in Calcutta put Indian ornithology on a sound scientific basis. T.C. Jerdan's *Birds of India* published in the early 1860s, was for many years an indispensable authority. Brian Hodgson trained his Indian artists to paint to his exacting standards of accuracy, adding wherever necessary, life-size pencil drawings of beaks, legs and claws.

9. "Ielerang or Javan squirrel—Sciurus javensis".
Hand-coloured lithograph by J. W. Moore after Edward Lear from John Edward Gray's Gleanings from the menagerie and aviary at Knowsley Hall, *Knowsley, 1846.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

In addition to studying the flora of the Himalayas, John Forbes Royle, the Company Surgeon who was appointed to Saharanpur in 1823, also examined the fauna of the region. Among the studies of flowers in his *Illustrations of the botany and* *Fig. 8* *other branches of the natural history of the Himalaya mountains and of the flora of Cashmere* of 1839, is a page of butterflies and moths delicately lithographed by M. Gauci.

Edward Lear (1812-1888)

The artist Edward Lear claimed to have painted some of the foregrounds in *A century of birds hitherto unfigured, from the Himalaya Mountains.* Gould engaged him to contribute some of the illustrations to the *Birds of Europe,* which followed the publication of the former work in 1832. Lear, who is remembered today mainly for his nonsense verse and his topographical drawings, actually started his career as a zoological artist, and his *Illustrations of the family of Psittacidae, or parrots* began

10. "Indian zibeth. Viverra zibetta".
A hand-coloured lithograph by Waterhouse Hawkins from John Edward Gray's Illustrations of Indian zoology, *London, 1834.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.
The original drawing was made from the living specimen in the Surrey Zoological Gardens in South London.

to appear in 1830 when he was eighteen years old. As a result, he was immediately acclaimed as a brilliant bird painter and Lord Stanley (later Earl of Derby) invited him to Knowsley Hall near Liverpool to draw birds and animals in his private menagerie. Over a period of four years, Lear made frequent visits to Knowsley, executing more than a hundred drawings, a selection of which was lithographed by him for *Gleanings from the menagerie and aviary at Knowsley Hall,* published in 1846. Lear's lively portraits confirm his practice of drawing from live rather than stuffed specimens. He succeeded in conveying the personality of his "sitters" and at the same time, he was able to satisfy the scientific requirements of the zoologist. It was thus a great loss to zoological art when Lear turned to landscape painting. *Fig. 9*

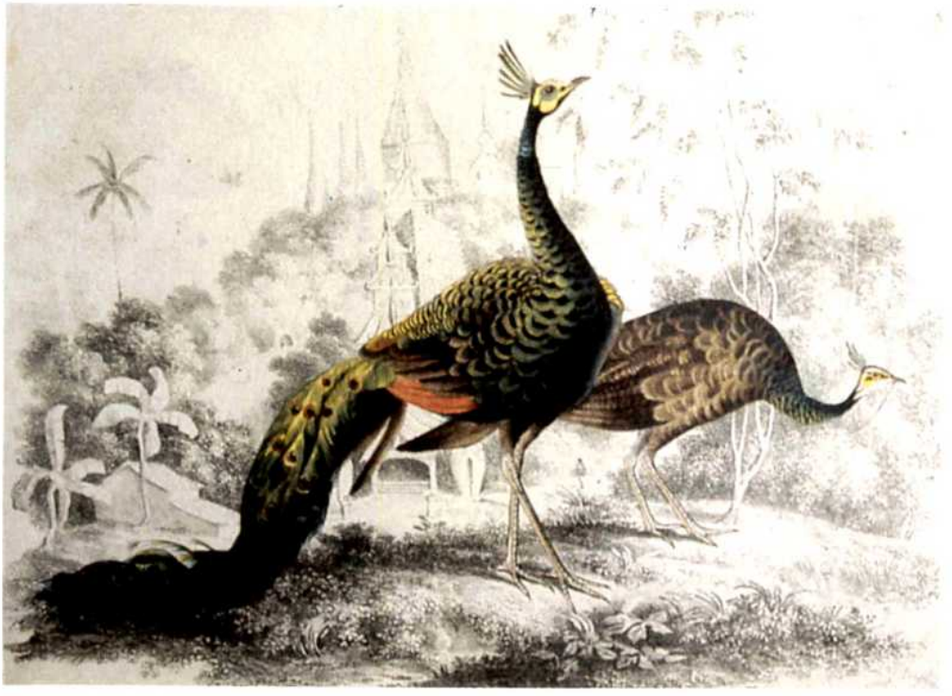
John Edward Gray of the British Museum, who edited *Gleanings from the menagerie and aviary at Knowsley Hall,* had collaborated with Thomas Hardwicke in producing *Illustrations of Indian zoology* between 1830 and 1834. During his long service with the Bengal Artillery, Major-General Hardwicke had amassed an impressive collection of animal, bird and flower drawings by Indian and European artists. On his retirement in 1823, he brought the collection with him to England. Bird portraiture predominates

11. "Crodilus pondicerianus."
Lithograph by G. H. Ford from Albert Gunther's Reptiles of British India, *London, 1864.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

Fig. 10 in *Illustrations of Indian zoology,* with a token representation of mammals, reptiles and fishes. He is an outstanding example of the all-round amateur naturalist whose activities were a major contribution to the advancement of research in India.

Albert Gunther

Like John Edward Gray, Albert Gunther, a Keeper of Zoology at the British Museum, was one of many professional naturalists who benefited from the efforts of the amateur. He acknowledged his debt of gratitude in the introduction to his *Reptiles of British India* of 1864: "I have enjoyed the great advantage of unlimited access to collections accumulated in this country from the time of Russell." The entire collection of reptiles in the India Museum, established by the East India Company, was transferred to the British Museum in 1860; one of the by-products of cataloguing this collection was *Reptiles of British India*, which Gunther claimed was "the first attempt to
Fig. 11 comprise the entire Reptilian fauna of the continent of the Indian region."



12. Peacocks.
Hand-coloured lithograph by Sir Charles D'Oyly and Christopher Webb Smith, printed at the Behar Lithographic Press, Patna, c. *1830.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

13. Tom Raw face to face with the enemy.
Hand-coloured aquatint after Sir Charles D'Oyly from his Tom Raw the Griffin. . . the adventures of a cadet in the East India Company's service, *London, 1828.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

The Amateur Naturalist

James Forbes was typical of his time in that he made a study of and sketched a particularly varied range of subjects, while posted in India. As a result of this, he may be classified as an amateur naturalist, an amateur artist and perhaps even an amateur Orientalist, so pervasive was his interest. The results of his findings are interspersed throughout the text of *Oriental memoirs,* which although not published until 1813, is a record of his much earlier activities, between 1766 and 1784, in India.

Some two decades later, Sir Charles D'Oyly and his circle of friends in Patna were intent on the publication of the *Behar Amateur Lithographic Scrap Book*s. These
Fig. 12 included many charming vignettes showing the local fauna, often coloured and heightened with varnish, set against a landscape background. The same Press also produced books entirely devoted to the subject, such as *The Feathered Game of Hindostan* in 1828 and *Oriental Ornithology,* the following year. The more light-hearted aspects of the sketching activities of D'Oyly and his circle are reflected in his humorous illustrations to *Tom Raw the Griffin.* This "burlesque poem" written by D'Oyly, tells the life story and adventures of an East India Company cadet. In one of the scenes, poor
Fig. 13 Tom is shown suddenly faced with the enemy while pig-sticking.

Trailing behind the professional and amateur naturalists were men and women who though attracted by the beauty and the curiosities of the natural world, never progressed much beyond an undemanding appreciation. Such a person was Fanny Parks. Obviously a woman of impulses and enthusiasms, she wrote vivaciously and with an artist's eye of her memorable years in northern India between 1822 and 1845 in *Wanderings of a pilgrim, in search of the picturesque* published in 1850. Her passion for collecting quite indiscriminately resulted in a sort of museum, which included "tigers', and hyenas' skulls, alligator's skeleton whole; a delightful little pet in spirits of wine, cobra de capello, scorpions, lizards, millepieds, grillus monstrosus, and I know not what." She gave soldiers bottles of beer in exchange for butterflies. Her description of some leaf butterflies, "like two autumnal leaves laid upon one another," was a typical lyrical response to visual beauty.

Only a century after Fanny Parks' death in 1875, vast stretches of tropical forest, the habitat of much of India's wildlife, have been destroyed. The Government of India has established national parks to protect many threatened species. Despite pressures on land for development there is an encouraging awareness of the need to ensure the survival of India's wildlife. The fauna is as much part of India's heritage as the temples, palaces, forts and works of art.

17

AMATEUR ARTISTS IN WESTERN INDIA: JAMES FORBES AND ROBERT MELVILLE GRINDLAY

PAULINE ROHATGI

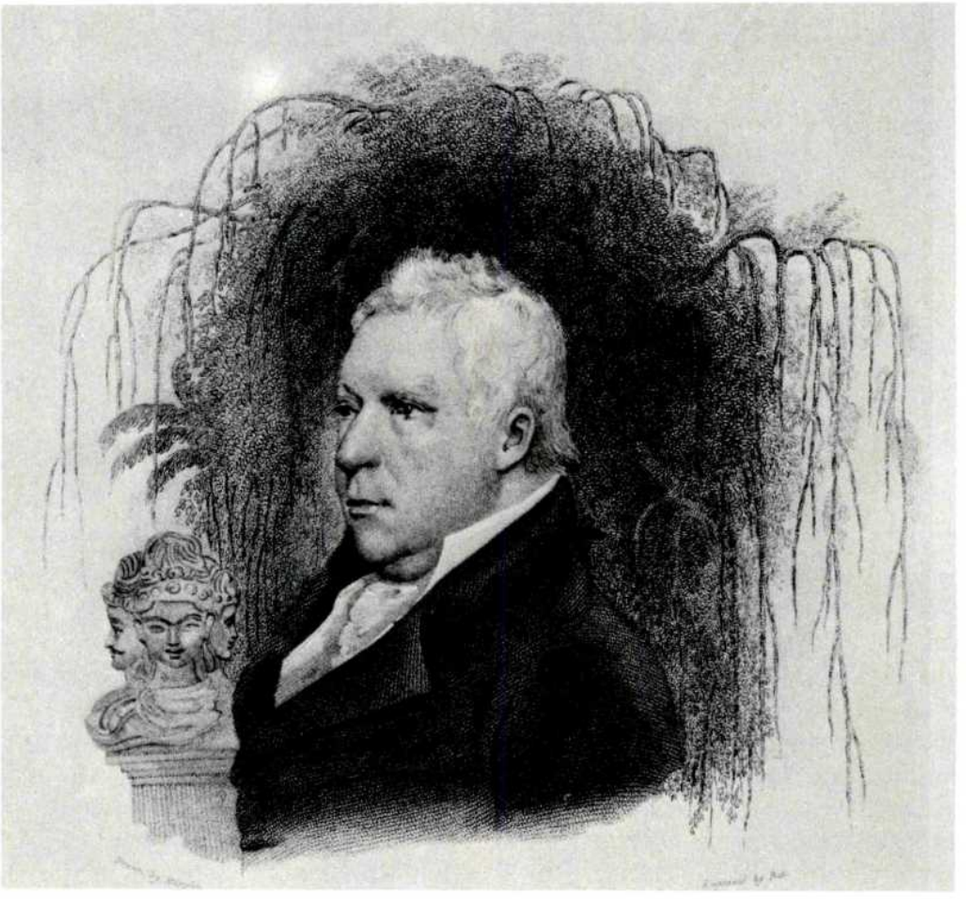
The number of British artists whose work centred upon the three Presidency cities, varies greatly with each location. Perhaps because the Bombay Presidency was the last to extend beyond the boundaries of the city, very few professional British artists went there during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Most of them sought patronage in Calcutta.

Thus in view of the comparative rarity of topographical material relating to western India dating from this period, the activities of two prolific amateur artists, who were based in Bombay, are especially significant. Their sketches resulted in two of the most important illustrated books on this region. The first, James Forbes, was an East India *Fig. 1* Company civilian and the second, Robert Melville Grindlay, served in the Bombay Army. Grindlay was also the founder of the banking house which bears his name. Both men spent almost two decades in the country. They had wide-ranging interests and that spirit of enquiry which was typical of their time. In addition to this, as individuals, they seem to have been unusually independent and adventurous. Above all, they both responded to the Indian environment in a way that went far beyond its purely visual aspects.

They returned to England with a wealth of material and each planned a major publication. Forbes actually stated that he had, while in India, compiled "fifty-two thousand pages, contained in 150 folio volumes" including numerous drawings and written observations. His *Oriental memoirs* was first published in four volumes by White, Cochrane & Co. of Fleet Street in 1813.

Robert Melville Grindlay's *Scenery, Costumes and Architecture, chiefly on the Western side of India* was published between 1826 and 1830 in two volumes, each containing three parts. The first two parts were published by Rudolph Ackermann while Smith, Elder & Co. of Cornhill published the remaining four. More than half its total number of thirty-six prints was based on Grindlay's own sketches, and as he noted in the introduction: "The subjects presented to the public in this work, form a small part of a collection of Sketches and Drawings, made by the author while in the service of the East India company."

It is evident from their books that Forbes and Grindlay were familiar with much of the published literature on India. Grindlay had certainly read *Oriental memoirs,* along with Lord Valentia's *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abbyssinia, and Egypt in 1802-06.* He also refers to James Tod's work on Rajasthan, which was published only in 1829 and 1830. Forbes greatly admired John Fryer's acute observations in his published letters from India. Fryer, who had travelled widely, had been appointed



1. James Forbes (1749-1819).
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

physician at Bombay about a century before Forbes himself arrived on the scene. Forbes was also familiar with the writings of several Orientalists, including Sir William Jones. At the same time, it is evident that both Forbes and Grindlay supervised the production process of their own books very closely.

Amid its extensive text, *Oriental memoirs* contains about 100 prints, mostly after original sketches by Forbes himself. These display a variety of printing techniques. The topographical scenes and studies of customs were mainly produced by the new technique of steel engraving, while the natural history studies, mostly high quality aquatints, provide almost the only colour to the illustrations. Forbes also experimented with lithography and included several of his own somewhat naive efforts in the volumes. Dated 1811, they are reputedly the earliest lithographs to appear in this form, as illustrations in a printed book.

The scenes in Grindlay's work, on the other hand, were produced by means of the more traditional process of aquatint. The actual production of these prints, from the original sketch to the final printed aquatint, was exceptionally elaborate by any standards. Altogether, more than twenty-five artists took part in it. They included several who, apart from Grindlay, made the original sketches in India, and he noted that "for some of the subjects he is indebted to the kindness of his friends, whose names are acknowledged on the respective plates." For instance, there was William Westall, a professional artist, who saw Bombay and part of the Western Ghats in 1804, besides

Lieutenant-Colonel John Johnson of the Bombay Engineers whose sketches were used by Grindlay. In addition, Grindlay commissioned leading professional landscape artists in England to work up these sketches for the engravers. Then, two or even three engravers (etchers, aquatinters and colourists) would work on each plate. Grindlay added that he "pledges himself to the fidelity of the representations, and [that] he has spared neither labour nor expense in the execution of the work." Besides the short introduction, Grindlay wrote a separate historical and topographical description of each subject as shown in the prints.

In contrast with the sharp linear and rich tonal qualities of the mostly black and white illustrations in *Oriental memoirs,* the aquatints in Grindlay's book are vibrant with colour. They display a perfection of the aquatint printing process, which places Grindlay's publication among the finest illustrated books ever produced. They contain an unusually wide range of coloured inks used in the actual printing, with the result that hardly any additional hand-colouring was needed to complete the effect.

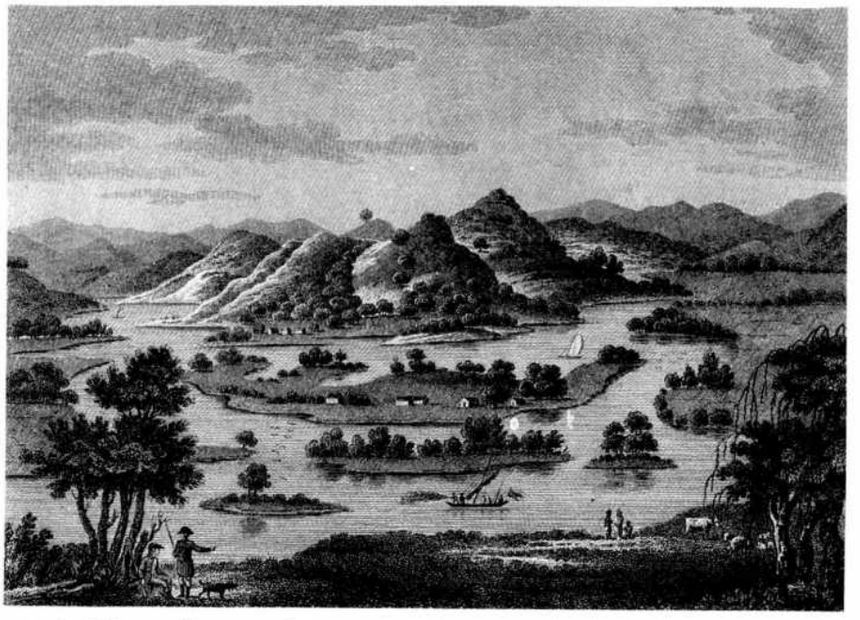
James Forbes (1749-1819)

It was almost thirty years after Forbes finally left India, that his *Oriental memoirs* was published. He arrived in Bombay as a writer after a voyage of almost a year via Brazil, in early 1766. He spent his first five years in Bombay, living in the Fort area. At that time, Bombay was developing as the premier port and commercial centre on the west coast, and there were many opportunities for young Company servants stationed there.

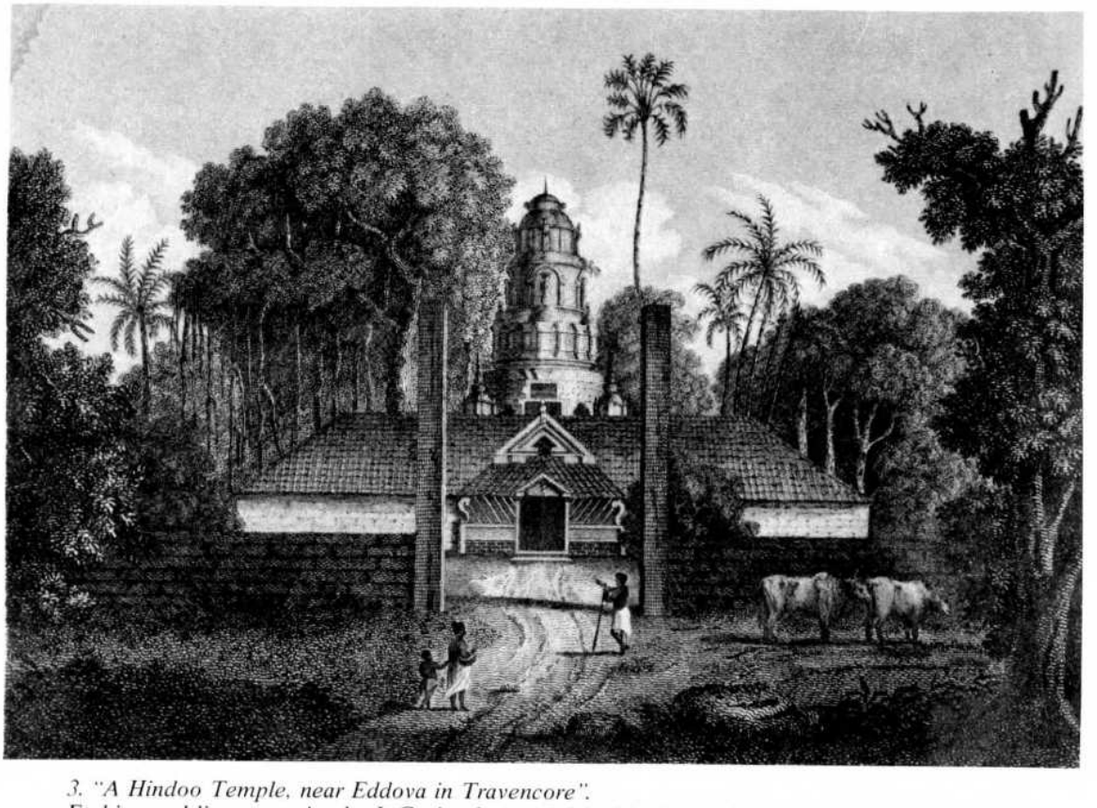
The text of *Oriental memoirs* was based upon a series of letters. Throughout his seventeen years in India, Forbes was writing to a close relative "whose congenial mind wished to share in the novelty I met with in a part of the globe, which is unrivalled in its gratification for travellers of every description; especially for a youth, to whom all the world was new." If the publication of *Oriental memoirs* had predated William Hodges' *Select Views in India,* which appeared between 1785 and 1788, it would have been rated even more highly, as a pioneer illustrated work on India.

The customs, culture and traditions of the local people emerge from the text as foremost among Forbes' wide-ranging interests. Perceptive comments on the agriculture, the variety of products and the economic conditions of life in the villages are interspersed with more general observations on the places he saw. Throughout, there is a marked fascination with the flora and fauna and even the geological and mineral wealth of different areas. He was equally interested in the scenery and the topography, with the result that a large number of the illustrations shows views of places, including noted architectural and archaeological monuments in western India. Most of these were engraved from his own sketches made on the spot, and they represent, in some cases, the earliest topographical records of the more remote areas. Unlike Grindlay, who would almost certainly have been given lessons in survey drawing as part of his cadet training, Forbes was a self-taught amateur artist. He claimed to have had no other instruction except a few hints from Sir Archibald Campbell (later Governor of Madras), when they met in Bombay in 1768.

The first chapters of *Oriental memoirs* describe Bombay, its Fort area, the harbour, docks, public buildings, houses and the "amiable character of the European inhabitants." The descriptions are accompanied with three prints. They show a view of Bombay Green (now Horniman Circle), which Forbes sketched from his writer's apartment, the Fort with the Company's buildings as seen from the harbour, and the southern part of Bombay taken from Malabar Hill. This vivid scene includes the Fort, harbour and the mainland with the island of Karanja in the distance.



2. "View on Bancoote River; in the Concan. Taken from Dazagon Hill".
Etching and line-engraving by J. Storer after an original by James Forbes of 1771, London, 1813.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.



3. "A Hindoo Temple, near Eddova in Travencore".
Etching and line-engraving by J. Greig after an original by James Forbes of 1772, London, 1813.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

The Hot Springs of Dasgaon

In 1771, as Forbes wrote, "a slight indisposition occasioned me to go for a few weeks to the hot-wells at Dazagon, a village belonging to the Mahrattas, in the Concan, near the English settlement of Fort Victoria." Situated on the coast about half-way between Bombay and Ratnagiri, Fort Victoria (Bankot) was then administered by two civil servants and a small group of sepoys. The village and hill of Dasgaon lay about forty-eight kilometres inland along the Bankot (now the Savitri) River, and it still exists on the main Goa road near Mahad. Forbes described the remedial effects of these hot springs: "by relaxing the fibres, without exhausting the strength, they seem peculiarly adapted to invigorate the system, and counteract the languor incident to Europeans in the torrid zone."

During the few weeks spent in this region of the Western Ghats, which was probably his first excursion beyond the limits of Bombay, Forbes noted many things. He found the grandeur of the scenery overwhelming: "As these hills approach the Deccan mountains, the scenery assumes a sublime aspect: the landscape is varied by stupendous heights, narrow glens, dark woods and impenetrable jungles . . . ."

Forbes chose to illustrate his visit with a panoramic view taken from the top of the hill: "Few prospects exceed that from Dazagon Hill, where the English resident of Fort Victoria had a small villa, in which we spent a few days: it commands a view of the river meandering through an extensive valley, and forming a number of islands, clothed with wood, and abounding in villages, cattle, fisheries, and agriculture: this beautiful landscape is bounded by verdant hills and lofty mountains. It was at sun-rise I first beheld this lovely scene, I seated myself under a mango-tree with my sketch-book, wondering how any one could remain in a house, where nature was so lavish of her charms." *Fig. 2*

Anjengo

From then onwards, Forbes had many more opportunities to explore the rural regions of western India. Shortly after returning to Bombay, his health restored, he sailed to Surat. The following year, he was appointed a member of the Council at Anjengo, one of the earliest trading posts established by the East India Company on the Malabar coast. Forbes sailed from Bombay in February 1772, "and in a fortnight arrived at Anjengo, after a delightful voyage, during which we stopped at most of the principal places on the coast." Scenes of the port towns of Goa, Tellicherry, Calicut and Cochin appear in *Oriental memoirs* to illustrate his journey.

While staying at Anjengo, he experienced the monsoon much more forcefully, it seems, than previously. His cottage was situated near the beach, and "during that period, the tempestuous ocean rolls from a black horizon, literally of 'darkness visible' a series of floating mountains heaving under hoary summits, until they approach the shore, . . . every ninth wave is observed to be generally more tremendous than the rest, and threatens to overwhelm the settlement."

Edava

Although his stay at Anjengo was curtailed, Forbes collected much information about the Travancore district. He made excursions inland, noting especially the subtropical vegetation and gathering details about the traditions and life-style of the local people. Away from Bombay, he had a better opportunity to study examples of Indian *Fig. 3*

V.P. 0069

architecture and he included a view of a temple, typical of the locality, in *Oriental memoirs.* This small Hindu temple was situated near Edava, a former Danish settlement on the coast half-way between Anjengo and Quilon. The English Chief at Anjengo had a villa there and, during the rains, Forbes went to stay with him and his wife for a few weeks. He sketched the temple at the same time. Then, on returning to his cottage at Anjengo, he was horrified to find that an army of white ants had been at work. Before leaving for Edava, he had "locked up a room, containing books, drawings, and a few valuables; as I took the key with me, the servant could not enter to clean the furniture: the walls of the room were white-washed, adorned with prints and drawings in English frames and glasses: returning home in the evening [from Edava], and taking a cursory view of my cottage by candle-light I found everything apparently in the same order as I left it; but on nearer inspection the next morning . . . ."

During this period at Anjengo, Forbes was missing his friends and the lively society of Bombay. He therefore obtained permission to leave the post before completing his official term of office, and he returned to Bombay within the year.

Island of Karanja

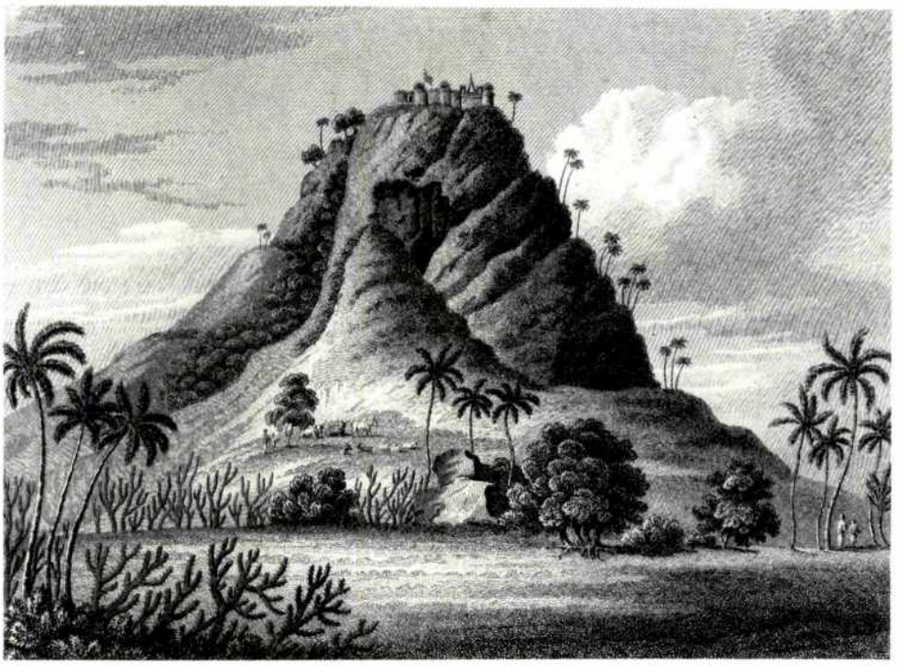
The British acquisition of the islands of Elephanta, Karanja and Salsette in 1774, enabled people to travel more freely and visit the temple sites. Although he had already visited Kanheri in Salsette, Forbes soon saw the other places. He sailed to Karanja where he found "nothing more than a large Mahratta village, with low straggling houses, near a tank covered with wild ducks and water-fowl, hitherto unmolested by Europeans. On its
Fig. 4 banks a small fort, a Portugueze church, and a Hindoo temple embellished the view. The principal fort stands on the summit of a lofty mountain, romantically diversified by woods and rock: the ascent is steep and difficult."

One result of a trip to Elephanta in 1774 (where he once spent four days), was the publication of an engraving of the main cave temple. This was worked up by James Wales in London from the original sketch by Forbes and engraved on a large scale by James Phillips. It was published in 1790 and the same view, engraved by J. Greig, appeared in *Oriental memoirs.* Forbes also praised the "views of those stupendous works on both islands [Elephanta and Salsette], since delineated by Mr. Daniell [Thomas Daniell] with accuracy and effect which characterize all his productions, [and] give a correct idea of their general appearance."

Broach

In 1775, Forbes had the opportunity to see more of Gujarat when he accompanied a British mission sent to assist the former Peshwa of Poona, Raghunath Rao, who was attempting to regain the title and whose army was then in Gujarat. Between late 1775 and 1777, Forbes went home to England, and after returning to Bombay with "a beloved sister," the remainder of his career in India was spent in this province.

Forbes was appointed Custom Master in the historic city of Broach on the Narbada
Fig. 5 River. "Soon after my arrival at Baroche," he wrote, "I purchased a small house and some land in the village of Vezel-poor, about a mile from the city . . . . My garden occupied about six acres; I formed it as much as possible after the English taste, and spared no pains to procure plants and flowers from different parts of India and China . . . . My favourite seat was under a tamarind tree, near the well; the adjoining shrubberies were generally enlivened by squirrels, parrots, and bulbuls." Among his



4. "Hill Fort on the Island of Caranjah".
Etching and line-engraving by J. Storer after an original by James Forbes of 1774, London, 1813.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

5. "Garden-House in a village near Baroche, in Guzerat".
Stipple engraving by Bate after an original by James Forbes of 1778, London, 1813.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

favourite pastimes, besides sketching, were picnics and hunting parties on the banks of the Narbada.

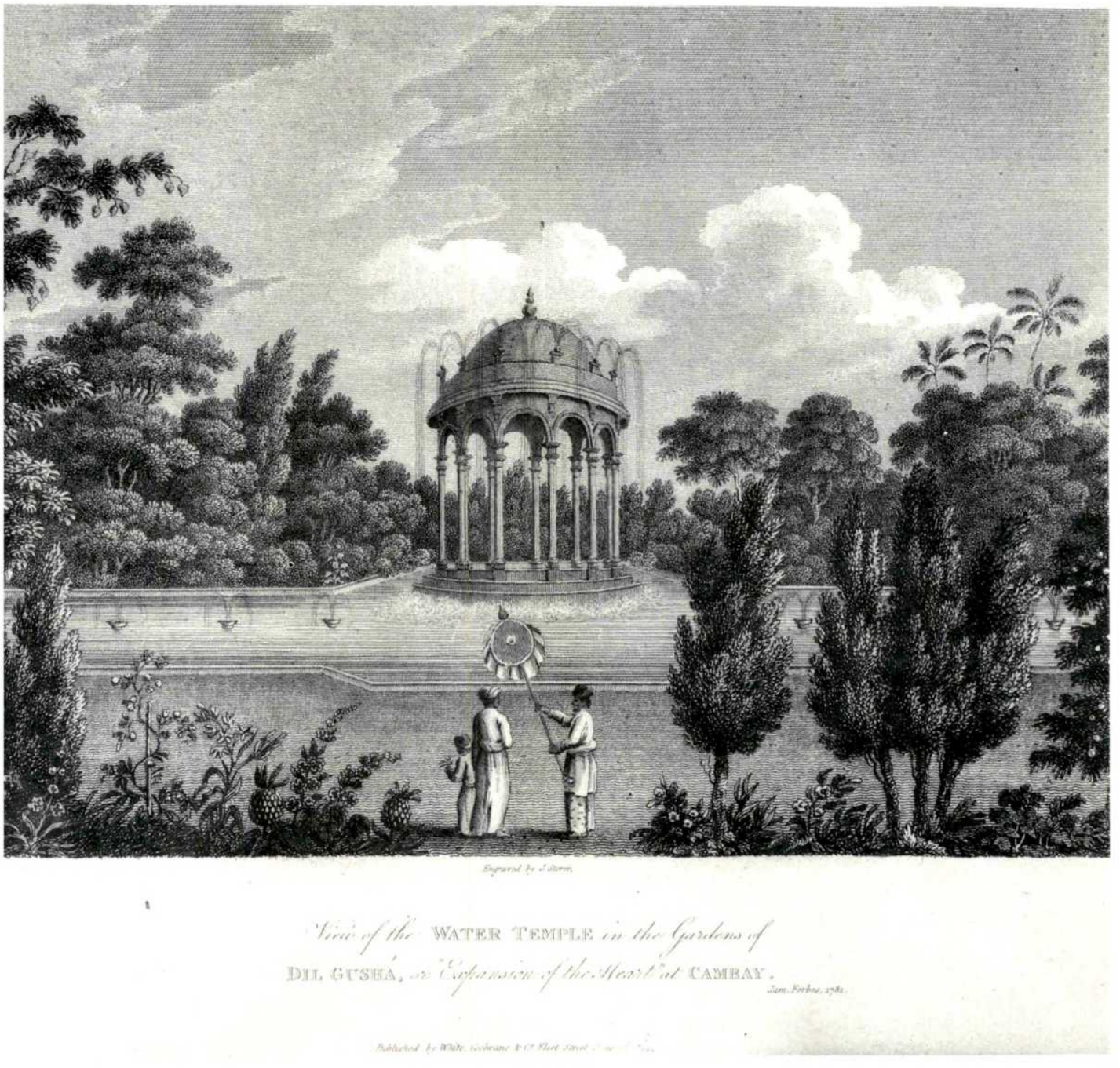
Forbes was unable to enjoy his garden villa for long. In 1780, he was transferred to Dabhoi as Collector of Revenue, a position that involved much travelling in the district. This enabled him to explore the rural areas and to involve himself even more closely with the local people: "In my secluded situation in Guzerat, I seemed to be blest with another sense. My friends in India were happy to enlarge my collection; the sportsman suspended his career after royal game to procure me a curiosity; the Hindoo often brought a bird or an insect for delineation, knowing it would regain its liberty; and the Brahmin supplied specimens of fruit and flowers from his sacred enclosures."

The Garden of the Dilkusha at Cambay

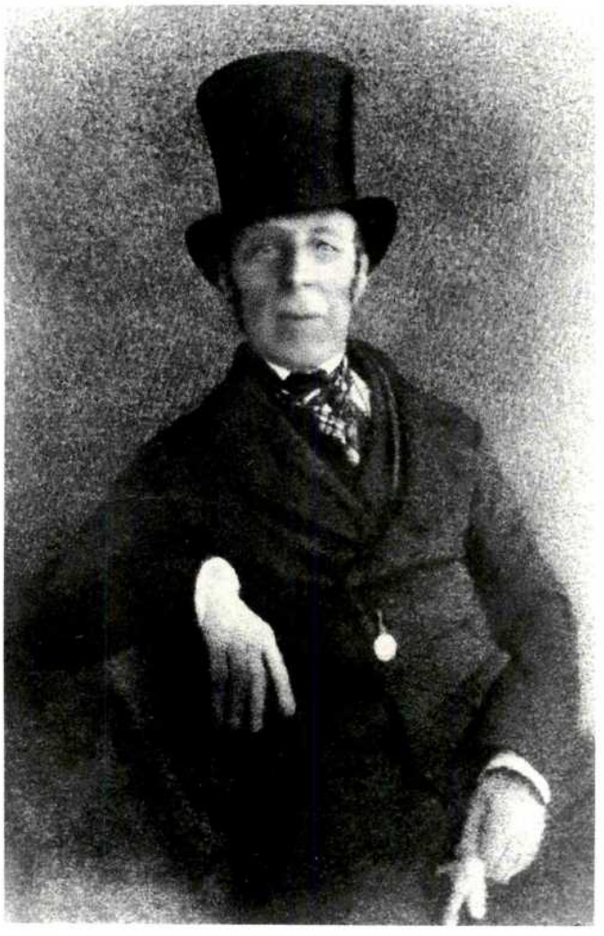
The following year, Forbes went on a journey to Ahmedabad and visited the port of Cambay. It was during this visit that the Nawab of Cambay invited him and his colleagues to spend an evening at his summer palace, the Dilkusha. From the terrace roof of one of the pavilions, where the Nawab entertained his guests, there was an extensive view of the Gulf of Cambay. It was, however, an unusual feature in the
Fig. 6 garden that specially interested Forbes. This was the Water Temple. He described it as set in the centre of a canal: "an octogan marble temple of singular construction; each perforated column contains a leaden pipe, which conveys water to the roof of the temple, where from eight fountains round the dome it falls over the projecting architrave on screens of sweet-scented khusa-grass, and gently trickling through the matted verdure renders the internal atmosphere delightful." Apparently this garden was originally designed by Charles Reynolds, Surveyor General of western India, and was subsequently purchased by the Nawab of Cambay.

On January 18, 1784, Forbes embarked finally from Bombay on the *General Elliot* bound for England. There, he appears to have settled down to the life of a cultured English gentleman. He joined several of the learned societies, and four years later, he married Rose Gaylard whose family lived at Stanmore near London. He subsequently travelled widely on the Continent. In 1803, during the Peace of Amiens, he took his wife and only daughter, Eliza, to Holland and on to Paris, without realizing that war was again imminent. As a result, they found themselves, along with all the British subjects, detained in Paris and were later interned at Verdun. It was only after Forbes wrote a letter from Verdun to the President of the French Institute, explaining his plan to publish his work on India, and through the intervention of Sir Joseph Banks, President of the Royal Society in London, that they were allowed to return to England in June 1804.

Eliza married the French nobleman, Baron Marc de Montalembert, who had joined the British army and settled in England. It seems probable that the Baron was serving in India in 1807, since a number of his original sketches, dating from that year, were also engraved for *Oriental memoirs.* Their son, Charles, who was born in 1810 and who later became a noted orator and historian, was brought up largely by Forbes himself, since Eliza was mostly travelling with her husband. While Forbes was preparing his *Memoirs* for publication, he also compiled a digest of the notebooks which had returned with him from India, specially for Charles. These consisted of about forty volumes containing sketches, letters and verses, which still survive. It was during another of his Continental tours with his grandson in 1819, that Forbes died at Aix-la-Chapelle.



6. "View of the Water Temple in the Gardens of Dil Gusha, or 'Expansion of the Heart' at Cambay". Etching and line-engraving by J. Storer after an original by James Forbes of 1781. London, 1813. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.



7. Robert Melville Grindlay (1786-1877).
Courtesy Grindlay's Bank, London.

Robert Melville Grindlay (1786-1877)

Fig. 7 Robert Melville Grindlay was a generation younger than Forbes. Son of a London merchant, Grindlay joined the East India Company's military service as a cadet and sailed for Bombay in 1803. He was appointed a Lieutenant in the 7th Regiment of the Bombay Native Infantry in March 1804, and he remained with the same regiment throughout his military career. He was promoted to the rank of Captain in early 1817, the same year that he took furlough. It was probably then that he left India for good and returned to England, and he retired from army life altogether in December 1820. In July that year, he married Maria Susanna Commerell who came from a well-known Middlesex family.

Some time after this in London, Grindlay launched on his second career. While corresponding with former colleagues and meeting those who were planning careers or visiting India, he soon realized the need for an agency that could provide advice to people going to the country. In 1828, while he was still involved with the production of his book, he opened the firm of Leslie and Grindlay in Birchin Lane, close to the East India Company's headquarters, East India House, in the city. Although Grindlay himself retired from the firm in 1842, before it officially became the banking

house, he is nevertheless regarded as its founder. Even before his book was complete, his reputation was spreading. For example, in 1827, *Blackwood's Magazine,* while reviewing the first three parts of his *Scenery, Costumes and Architecture chiefly on the Western side of India,* wrote of Grindlay that, "pen, pencil or sword come alike to the hand of [this] accomplished British officer."

Bombay

On arrival in Bombay, Grindlay, like most newcomers, was impressed with the grandeur of the mainland scenery, and he described it in one of his texts: "The far-famed bay of Naples can scarcely be placed in comparison with Bombay, from the very description of beauty which characterises each. The former can boast of its Vesuvius, . . . the latter posseses beauties of a grander description and of more rare combination." Three prints in his book show the Fort area of Bombay and several others vividly depict the harbour and the mountains of the Western Ghats in stormy weather.

Like Forbes, he devoted his leisure time to sketching and to studying the environment, and as he also noted in his introduction: "The various appointments which he successively held . . . [gave] him peculiar advantages in collecting materials; and he has been induced, by the partiality of his friends, to present them to the public, by whom (as they tend to illustrate a large portion of the country hitherto undescribed), he trusts, they will be favourably received."

Despite the movements of the regiment, it is not possible to establish Grindlay's travels to the same extent as those of Forbes. This information is mainly to be found in his book since some of the prints carry the date of his original sketch. He went to Baroda in 1806 and he saw Ahmedabad in 1809. In March that year, along with three other assistants, he was appointed to assist the Surveyor General, Monier Williams, in his survey of Gujarat, which was carried out in the Dholka and Mehmadabad districts, south of Ahmedabad. This assignment lasted until the following year.

Deccan Journeys

Three years later, Grindlay was appointed assistant to G. Brown, a Member of the Council in Bombay. It was in the same year, 1813, that he made at least one long journey through the Deccan territories of the Nizam of Hyderabad. Original sketches of Hyderabad and Golconda, Aurangabad and Ellora and of Sasvad (a town near Poona, belonging to the Peshwa) date from that year. Prints of all these places were included in his *Scenery, Costumes and Architecture, chiefly on the Western side of India.* In which order Grindlay visited each location is not known. It seems, however, that he went at least to Aurangabad with Lady Hood, wife of the Vice-Admiral, Sir Samuel Hood, who was then Commander of the East Indies station. Several of Grindlay's original drawings, in particular those for some of the prints of Aurangabad, Ellora and Sasvad, were made specially for her. After her husband's death at Madras in 1814, Lady Hood married James Alexander Stewart Mackenzie, and she is called Mrs. Stewart Mackenzie in the lettering on those prints after the drawings which Grindlay had given to her.

Daulatabad

The views include Daulatabad, a former Mughal fortress, situated between Aurangabad and Ellora. By the time Grindlay was there, the entire area belonged to the Nizam,

8. "Dowtutabad the ancient Deo Gurh".
Coloured aquatint engraving by R. G. Reeve after a painting by William Daniell from an original sketch by Robert Melville Grindlay of 1813, London, 1826-1830.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

and he recalls his visit to this imposing site in the text to the print: "If difficulty of access constitute the importance of a fortress, few even in this land of Hill-Forts could vie with Dowlatabad, or the 'City of Riches', so called from being the repository of the jewels and treasure of the sultans of the south of India . . . . After entering the body of the rock, lighted by torches, the passage ascends in a winding direction with various branches and recesses for stores, and terminates in an opening above, which is defended by an iron plate . . . ."

Grindlay's original sketch of the fortress with the fifteenth-century Chand Minar or Pillar of Victory in the foreground, was prepared for the engraver, R. G. Reeve, *Fig. 8* by William Daniell. By this time, William Daniell (nephew of Thomas Daniell, with whom he had spent almost a decade in India), had become a leading professional landscape artist and engraver specializing in Indian subjects. He was involved, like other noted artists such as David Roberts and Clarkson Stanfield, in the preparation of several of the original sketches for Grindlay in London.

Ellora

Ellora was the only archaeological site which merited two views in Grindlay's book. One shows a dramatic view of the Kailasanatha temple, as seen through the archway *Fig. 9* of one of the shrines. The other shows the interior of one of the Jain caves, the

9. "Interior of the Cave Temple of Indra Subha at Ellora".
Coloured aquatint engraving by H. Pyall after David Roberts from an original by Robert Melville Grindlay of 1813, London, 1826-1830.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

Indra Sabba. In his text to this aquatint, Grindlay quoted a published letter written by Sir Charles Warre Malet, former Resident at Poona, to the Governor-General, Sir John Shore: "You enter this magnificent cave, or assemblage of caves by a handsome gateway, cut from the rocks on which two lions are couchant.... This temple is elaborately finished with sculpture and a mass of sculptured rock serves as a gate, left and fashioned when the avenue to the inner apartments was cut through the stony mountain." Grindlay's sketch of this temple was prepared for the engraver by David Roberts.

Grindlay further added: "The cave temples at Ellora are already known to the world in the splendid picturesque work by Mr. Daniell, [that is, Thomas Daniell, William's uncle] from the drawings of Mr. Wales [James Wales]; which however, contain rather the general effect, than the minutiae of ornamental and mythological sculpture." Grindlay agreed with William Erskine, Vice President of the Literary Society of Bombay, when he described Ellora as "the most wonderful monument of human industry and art."

Golconda

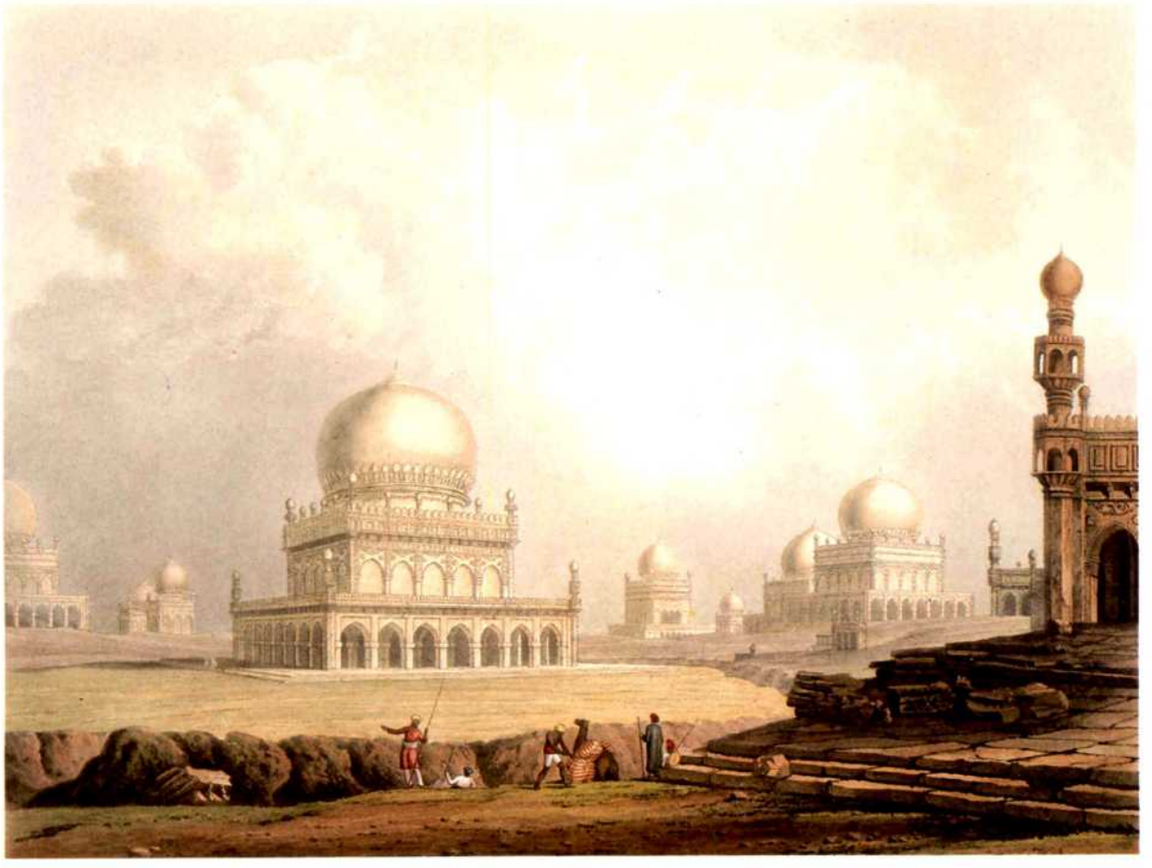
During his visit to Hyderabad, Grindlay drew the new British Residency, and visited the sixteenth and seventeenth-century tombs of the Kutb Shahi Kings of Golconda, about which he also wrote: "The tombs which form the subject of the annexed engraving are those of the kings of the Kootub Shahee [*sic*] dynasty, and their relations and principal dependents.... They are about six hundred yards from the walls of the fort.... Each tomb has a separate mosque near it, for the performance of the offices of religion....
Fig. 10 The large tomb in the centre of the engraving is that of Hyat Begum [Princess Hyat Bakhsh Begam], daughter of one of the kings."

Sasvad

Probably on his way back to Bombay, Grindlay stopped at Sasvad, situated off the high road between Hyderabad and Bombay, south-east of Poona. There he
Fig. 11 sketched a scene which resulted in one of the most delicately coloured aquatints in the book. He described the view: "The Delta of land at the confluence of two streams is a spot always held sacred by the Hindoos, and is usually occupied by some religious building. In the accompanying plate, it is intended to represent the junction of two small streams near the foot of the fortified hill of Poorundhur [Purandhar],... with a temple to Mahadeo under the epithet of Sungumsir or lord of the junction. In 1813, when the accompanying view was taken, there were some cultivated gardens and groves of beautiful trees, which derived an additional charm from the rocky barren character of the surrounding scenery." The plate was again engraved by R. G. Reeve from a drawing prepared from Grindlay's sketch by William Purser. This somewhat romanticised scene of the temple at Sasvad was the subject of another drawing by Grindlay, which he presented to Lady Hood.

Halvad

Grindlay also visited the Kathiawar peninsula in north-western India in 1813. This was probably when he sketched a small temple which became the subject of another engraving in his book. He noted that the area "still contains architectural remains of the
Fig. 12 highest antiquity, and of extraordinary richness and beauty.... The subject of this plate is a very ancient temple at Hulwud, dedicated to Mahadeo.... The mass of masonry in the fore-ground represents a well, to which the female is descending by a flight of steps.



10. "Tombs of the Kings of Golconda".
Coloured aquatint engraving by G. Hunt after an original by Robert Melville Grindlay of 1813, London, 1826-1830.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

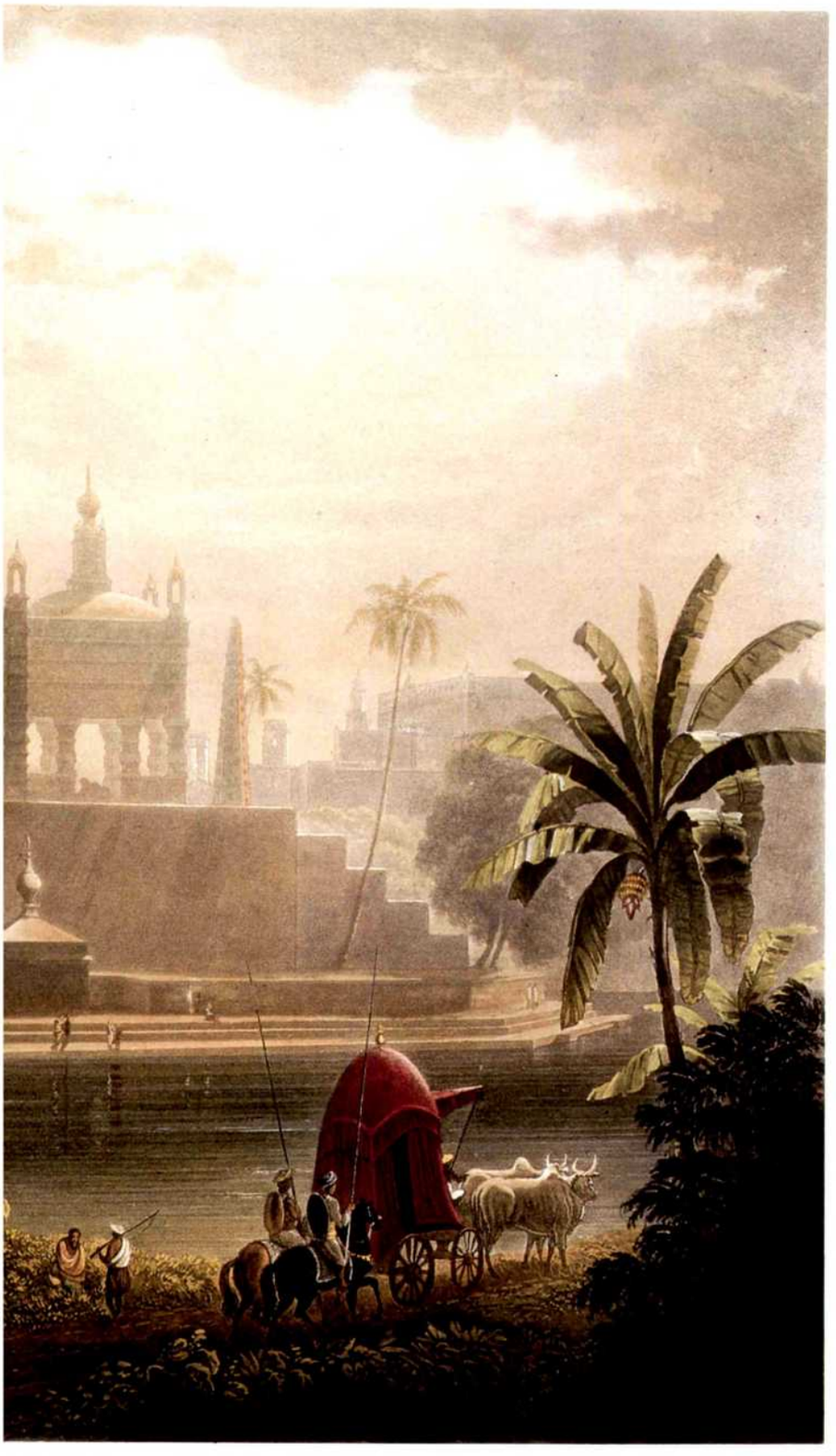
These subterraneous reservoirs [step-wells] present, throughout Guzerat, some of the most splendid specimens of architecture, combining utility with unbounded richness of sculpture."

The appreciation of so many facets of India and the industry that went into the production of these books by Forbes and Grindlay were typical of many amateur British artists, whose interests resulted in similar projects. Forbes would have been echoing their sentiments too, when he noted in the preface to his publication: "The manuscripts from which these volumes are compiled, and the drawings which illustrate them, have formed the principal recreation of my life. The pursuit beguiled the monotony of four India voyages, cheered a solitary residence at Anjengo and Dhubhoy, and softened the long period of absence from my native country . . . . Drawing to me had the same charm as music to the soul of harmony."

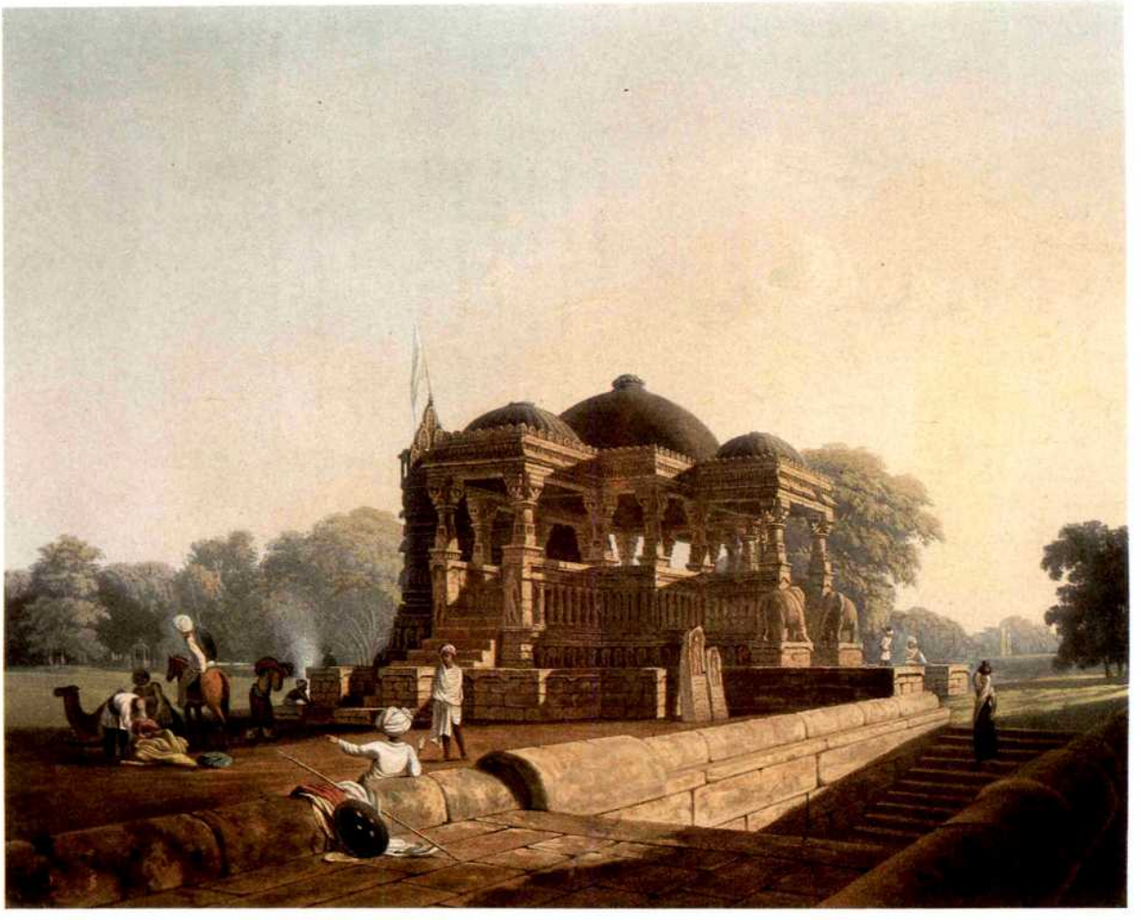
FURTHER READING

Further bibliographical information about the respective works of James Forbes and Robert Melville Grindlay and a complete list of the illustrations may be found in J. R. Abbey, *Travel in Aquatint and Lithography 1770-1860 from the Library of J. R. Abbey: A Bibliographical Catalogue*, ed. M. Oliver, vol. 2, Nos. 436 & 442 (London, 1957).

A second edition of Forbes' *Oriental memoirs*, revised and abridged by his daughter, Countess de Montalembert, was published in two volumes in 1834, with a separate atlas containing eighty-five of the illustrations which appeared the following year. The original four volumes with a selection of illustrations were reprinted for the



11. "View of Sassoor in the Deccan".
Coloured aquatint engraving by R.G. Reeve after William Purser from an original by R.M. Grindlay of 1813. London. 1826-1830.
India Office Library and Records. The British Library. London.



12. "Ancient Temple at Hulwud".
Coloured aquatint engraving by G. Hunt after F. Witherington from an original by Robert Melville Grindlay of 1813, London, 1826-1830.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

first time, with an introduction by Dr. W. H. Siddiqi, and published in New Delhi in 1988.

A second edition of Grindlay's *Scenery, Costumes and Architecture, chiefly on the Western side of India* was published in 1892 with reproductions of the original aquatints in the form of chromolithographs.

A discussion of both publications as compared with others dating from the early nineteenth century is given in M. Archer and R. Lightbown, *India Observed: India as viewed by British Artists 1760-1860,* Exhibition Catalogue (Victoria and Albert Museum: London, 1982).

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35

EATING HABITS OF THE BRITISH IN INDIA

SHALINI DEVI HOLKAR

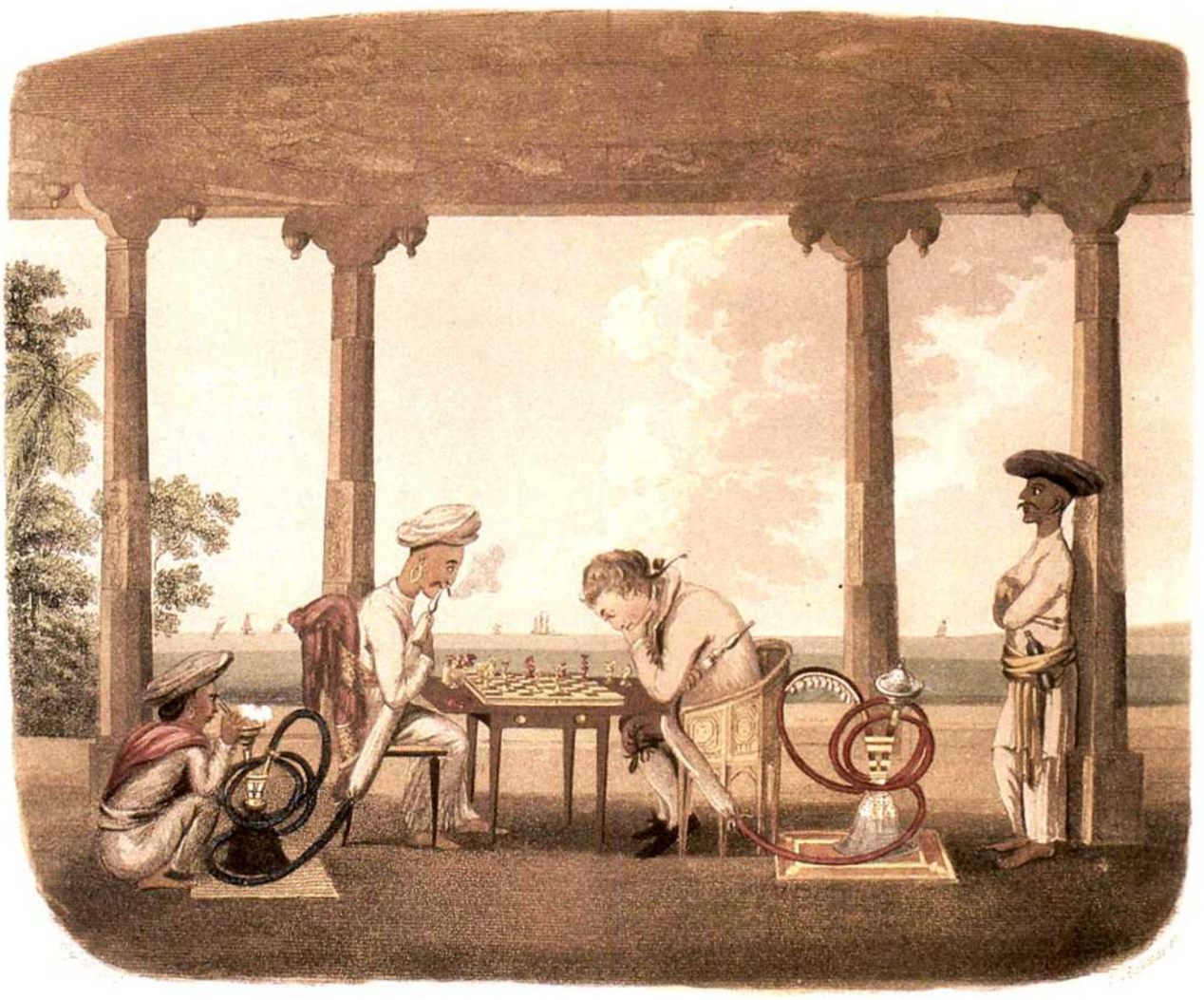
We see them languishing over the delights of a hookah after a meal, riotous at an overloaded table or stoically in pursuit of a wild boar for the larder. It is clear from prints and drawings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that the English in India were actively involved in the serious business of eating. *Fig. 1*

Memoirs and diaries of the British in India, from the seventeenth century onwards, are also full of the pleasures and pitfalls of the palate. The whole business has one underlying theme which, unfortunately, is that of over-indulgence. "Poor so-and-so was to have dined with us today" is a familiar refrain in English memoirs. Whether from boredom or homesickness (or perhaps from sheer greed), the English in India very often over-indulged and, as one diarist puts it dryly, they "celebrated their anniversaries in a suitable cemetary."

The over-indulgence was, of course, in two basic pleasures: food and drink. It also seems to have passed through two distinct periods: the pre-memsahib and the memsahib. Even a superficial study of early English memoirs reveals that the first intrepid adventurers and East India Company servants quite often liked the local food they were served in India. This was still the pre-memsahib period, so, for the most part, these early Englishmen were bachelors. They were, therefore, willing to try the local cuisine and admit that they liked it. There was, as yet, no wife or child who could come to grief in the process, and no one to complain about inadequate kitchens or over enthusiastic servants. *Fig. 2*

The comment of Sir Thomas Roe's chaplain in India, Edward Terry, upon Indian food is not atypical of the seventeenth century. He found that one of the dishes he sampled in India was "the most savorie meate I ever tasted, and doe almost thinke it that very dish which Jacob made ready for his father, when he got the blessing." Even the early professionals of the East India Company were receptive to Indian cuisine. At a Company lunch in Surat in the early seventeenth century, "cabob was a favourite dish, not unlike a goulash," says one memoir, "that is, chicken boiled in butter and stuffed with raisins and almonds, with mango acchar."

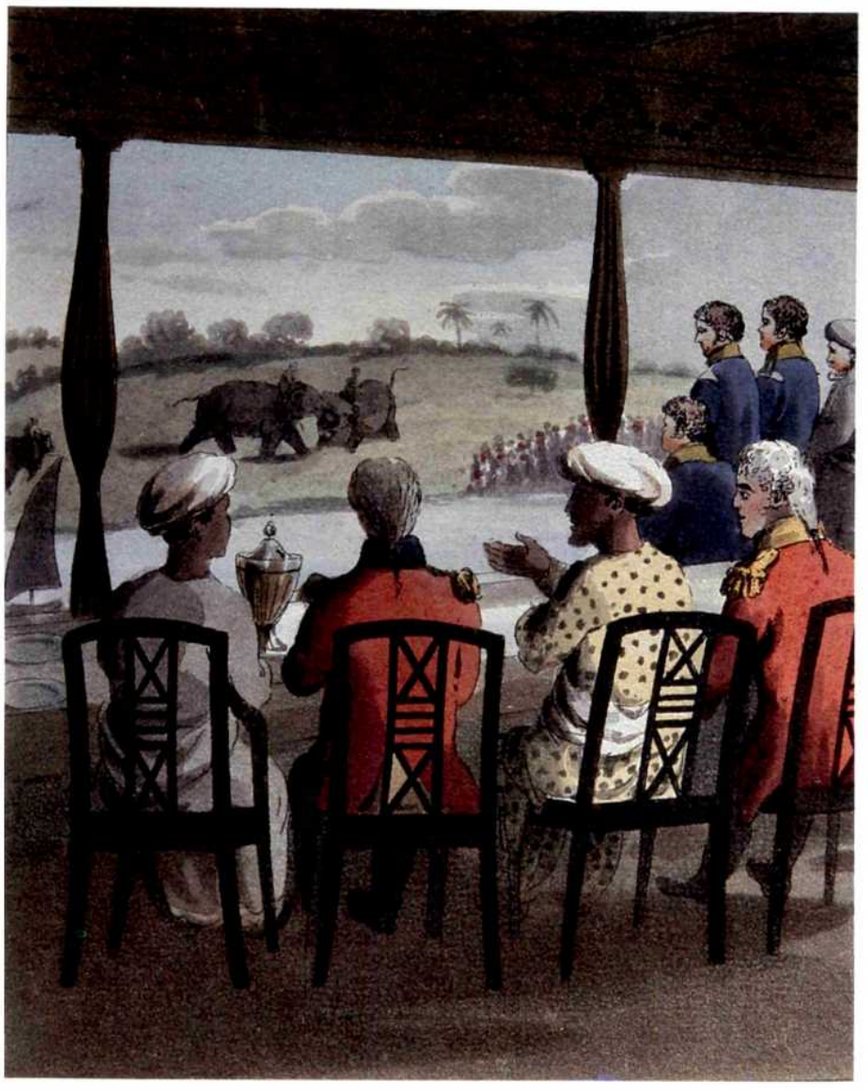
The meals in those early days may have been largely Indian, but the etiquette at meals was unabashedly English. When the president of the factory in Surat entered the common dining-room, "trumpets blew; and while he was at table violins played softly." That was when they ate a "simple" meal in the compound. When for special occasions they ate in a garden outside the city, "the President and his lady went in palanquin with banners. All the dishes and drinking vessels were of massive silver and each diner was attended by a Page. . . ."



1. Smoking the Hookah.
Hand-coloured aquatint engraving by T. Rickards after a drawing by Captain Charles Gold, from the latter's Oriental drawings, *London, 1806. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.*

There were dangers, of course. Apart from the obvious one of over-indulgence, there was also, in those early days, the fear of poison. Thomas Tryer reports in 1673 that tables in India "were strewn liberally with Dainties, served up in plates of China, which crack when poysoned . . . a necessary precaution." And elsewhere we read of "gentlemen in wigs and flowered coats toasting each other with Madeira and Shiraz wine served in "cups of rhinocerous horn which was an antidote against poison."

By the time the memsahibs began to arrive during the course of the early nineteenth century, deliberate poisoning was considerably less of a danger than over-indulgence.
Figs. 3, 4 Diaries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries attribute "overstuffed cemetaries" to claret, mangoes and "hectacombes of savoury meates," all of which were consumed to excess.



2. "Marquis Wellesley & his Suite, at the Nabob of Oude's Breakfast Table viewing an Elephant Fight". Hand-coloured aquatint engraving by J.H. Clark and C. Dubourg after a drawing by Sir Charles D'Oyly, from his The European in India, *London, 1813. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.*

"The breakfast partook of every country; tea, coffee, ices, jellies, sweetmeats, French pies, and other made dishes, both hot and cold. The Nawaub himself laughed, and said that his French cook had provided rather a dinner than a breakfast." (Lord Valentia, Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abbyssinia and Egypt, in the years 1802-06, *3 Vols. [London, 1809]).*

T. MAUDSLAY,

UNDERTAKER,

At Meſſrs. J. *and* R. STEWARTS,

FURNISHES FUNERALS on the ſhorteſt Notice; Erects TOMBS and MONUMENTS, cuts INSCRIPTIONS, &c. in a neat and handſome manner, on the moſt reaſonable Terms.

N.B. A HEARSE and MOURNING COACH, with neceſſary Appendages.

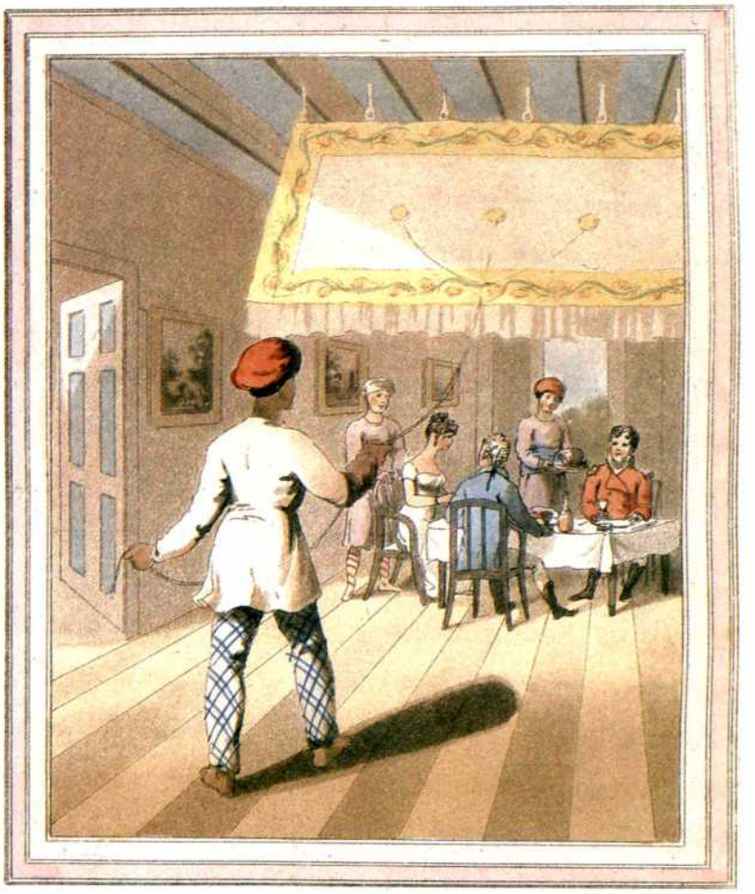
FLOUR MILL.

MR. CHRISTOPHER DEXTER begs Leave to inform the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Settlement and the Public in

3. Advertisement from the weekly journal, the Calcutta Gazette *in 1789. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.*

4. Advertisement from the Calcutta Gazette *in 1785. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.*

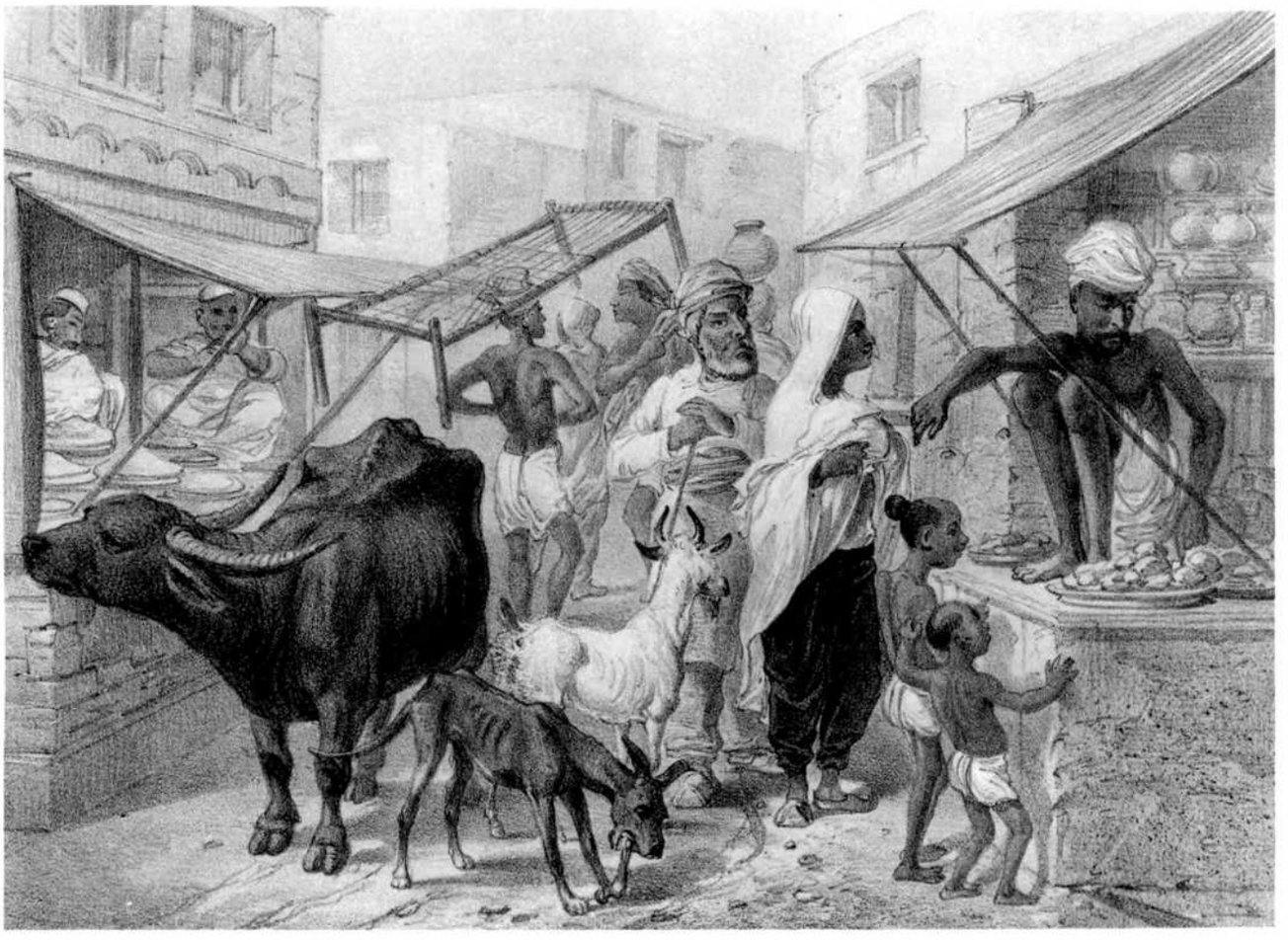
5. "A Gentleman's Kedmutgars, or Table Servants, bringing in Dinner".
Hand-coloured aquatint engraving by J.H. Clark and C. Dubourg after Sir Charles D'Oyly from his The European in India, *London, 1813.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.
"These are servants particularly employed in preparing all the apparatus for breakfast, dinner, &c. and they usually assist in the kitchen. It should be observed, that women are never employed in any domestic situation, except in the zenonah [sic], *or women's apartments, into which men are never supposed to obtain admission." (Text to this print by Captain Thomas Williamson).*



6. "An English Family at Table under a Punkah, or Fan, kept in motion by a Khelassy".
Hand-coloured aquatint engraving by J.H. Clark and C. Dubourg after Sir Charles D'Oyly, from his The European in India, *London, 1813.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.
"This place describes a Khelassy swinging a large Punkah, or fan; which being suspended from the top of the room, by means of several strong cords, or by iron hooks, is drawn to and fro, by the man who has hold of a rope . . . [and] being set in motion, it agitates the air greatly, and affords extreme refreshment to such as are seated under its line of action. Persons unaccustomed to the Punkah, sometimes are attacked with headaches . . . . Care should be taken to examine the ropes. Though I have witnessed several accidents of this kind . . . the damage has generally been limited to a few dishes, glasses, &c. being broken, or a table defaced." (Text to the print by Captain Williamson).

Later, during the nineteenth-century memsahib period, criticism of Indian food, Indian servants, Indian kitchens and Indian dinner parties was to become far more
Fig. 5 common than praise. There were, of course, exceptions—stalwarts like Emily Eden who found that the meals prepared for her as she travelled about India were "much relished, though simple" and were often prepared in an astonishingly short time and served piping hot. But, for the most part, there was a nostalgia for home and the familiar food of faraway England.

Although we see these ladies portrayed in their morning attire, inspecting the day's provisions under the faithful gaze of a retinue of loyal servants, many memsahibs in truth had difficult lives. Unlike the bachelors of the early India days, they had expectations and standards which were rarely fulfilled, especially concerning food.



7. "Our bazar".
Lithograph by Edmund Walker after Captain George Francklin Atkinson, from the latter's Curry and Rice, *London, 1860. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.*

The "Fishing Fleet"

The very first who came with the famous "fishing fleet" in the early nineteenth century, were single women, sent out by the Company. Referred to in one brochure as "gentlewomen" and "other women", they were given no dowry, but were guaranteed their "diet" for one year. By the end of that time they were expected either to marry or to make do on their own. Many a man who had sworn "he'd give the devil for a good English meal" was more than happy to wed such a woman and settle down to suet puddings and "panch".

In spite of the tranquil impression created by the prints and drawings of episodes such as a husband and wife at breakfast or a dinner party under a punkah, it would be *Fig. 6* an exaggeration to imply that (having married and set up a household in India) these women lived happily ever after. Their encounter with India and Indian conditions was hardly as simple as producing a suet pudding. Speaking strictly in terms of cooking and eating, leaving aside all their other problems, English women in India more often than not were faced with conditions that would have tried the most courageous and patient. For example, upon entering the new homes, the kitchens they encountered

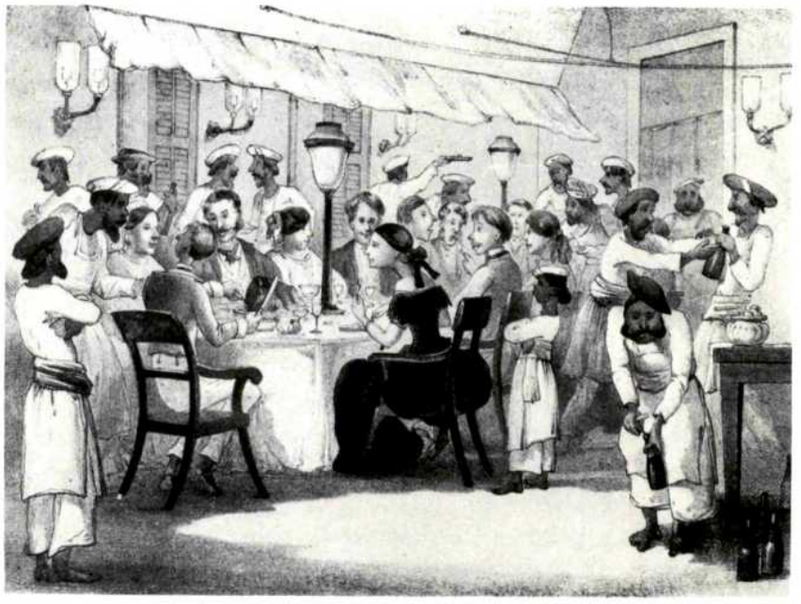
usually contained not one fork or spoon and were, in fact, often nothing more than "a hole, half a coconut shell and two sticks." This description comes from *The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook* written by Mrs. Flora Annie Steel and published in 1889. Mrs. Steel, a practical woman, dedicated her book to: "The English Girls to whom Fate May Assign the Task of Being House-Mothers in our Eastern Empire." Apart from recipes, the book is full of excellent advice: how to order from
Fig. 7 the bazaar without being cheated, how to raise proper lettuce in the garden, how to administer Enos salts to bilious cooks; and how to plan healthy meals for the children "who must not be raised on curry and cavaire, as this will lead them nowhere at all."

Mrs. Steel also advises every Englishwoman in India to learn to speak Hindustani. This latter piece of advice—had it been heeded—might have saved the Indian Empire, she avowed. For the men it was necessary to have a working knowledge of Hindustani. Domestically, it surely would have spared many a misunderstanding. As it was, linguistic farces plagued the domestic scene. The cook's menu listed items like "Salary Soup", "Anchovy Poshteg", "Roast Bastard" and "Ispunj Roll". And the memsahib shouted at the *khidmutgar*, "Hard Boiled! NOT underboiled!" "Yes Memsahib," he would reply patiently, "*unda* boiled," (*unda* being egg in his language).

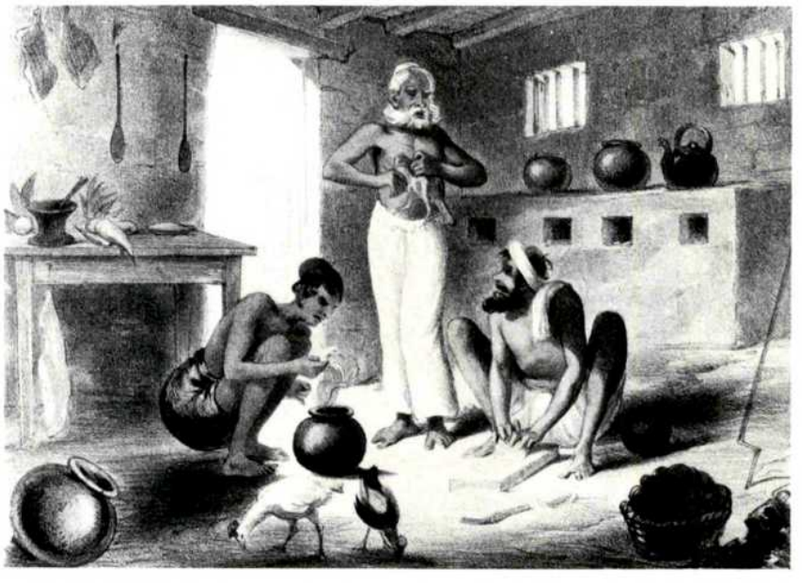
It is to their eternal credit that many an Indian cook managed exceptionally well under these circumstances, producing "sheep's head jellies," "blancmanges" and "marrow bone soups," the equal of any in England. In spite of all the misunderstandings and frustrations, there were somehow inventive gastronomic compromises between memsahib and cook. Dishes like Byculla Souffle, Burdwan Stew, Mulligatawny and Curry Chutney found their way into the annals of Indo-British cuisine and became permanent fixtures on menus from dak bungalows to the great houses of the land.

Much of this elaborate effort was made in the name of that seemingly unavoidable evil: The Dinner Party. There are many illustrations of the English at table. Most portray the meal as a rollicking or, at least, a congenial affair. The truth is revealed in the diaries. "We are a land of Dinners! Dining takes one eight of our lives," wails a nineteenth-century memoir. "The dinners were the worst," writes Emily Eden, "endless at the end of an endless day, with up to half hour waits between courses."
Fig. 8 "The number of servants necessary to a dinner party in India is most surprising, to a person fresh from Europe," writes Fanny Parks in 1850, "It would appear the commencement of ruin." Many a hostess might have agreed with Mrs. Parks. We see these ladies in the prints smiling demurely at the head of the elegant table, unfurrowed brow, elegant coiffure, seemingly free of any care in the world. But again in the diaries we learn the truth. As the dishes are served, memsahib is actually wondering
Fig. 9 whether, at that very moment, the cook is straining the soup through his turban or using his toes as a toast rack. Will he again filter the coffee through sahib's sock? (Not a clean one, memsahib, a used one!) And, under the table, are the footstools in place? It was well known that ladies' feet, at a dinner table, must be perched upon a *morah* to shield them from the everpresent centipedes and scorpions. In fact, many a hostess stepping in to check the table, would find it covered with little black crawly creatures just as the guests were summoned.

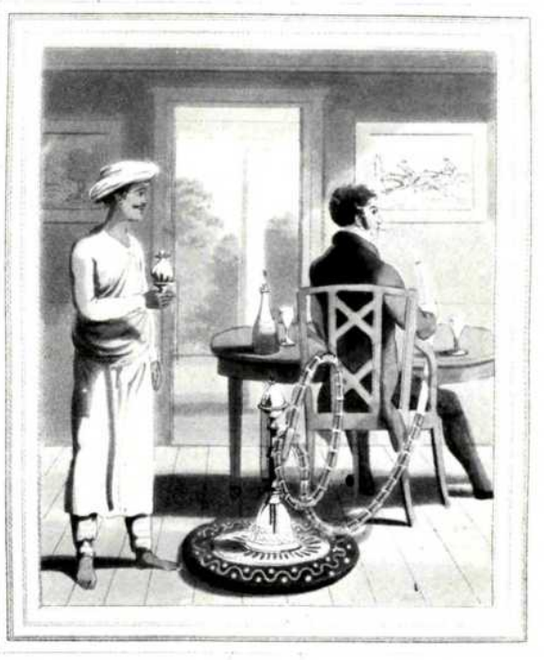
Little wonder that these long-suffering ladies sometimes joined their men in "lifting a glass for yet another toast to a guest." Mind you, the standards of the day not only condoned but actually required a certain amount of alcoholic intake. "At public dinners tiffins and breakfasts," according to one diarist, "there were never less that 10 and often over 25 toasts on the list." Even at the beginning of this century, it was usual for a gentleman to take his three bottles of claret after dinner each day, besides the Madeira which he consumed during the meal, and for a lady to drink one bottle of wine a day.



8. "Our Burra Khanah".
Lithograph by F. Jones after Captain George Francklin Atkinson from the latter's Curry and Rice, or the ingredients of social life at "our station" in India, *London, 1860.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.
"There now, an invitation to dinner!—to a 'Burra Khanah', literally a grand feed; one of the periodical explosions for which the Byles are celebrated, as it gratifies simultaneously the animal appetites of the guests and the sociable propensities of Mrs. Byle . . . . They are invariably celebration feasts, to record some important domestic event, as the anniversary of their wedding, birthdays, and the like; and this spread is to inaugurate the introduction of a tender Byle into this world, which took place last month . . . ." (Text to the print).



9. "Our Cook Room".
Lithograph by G. McCulloch after Captain George Francklin Atkinson, from the latter's Curry and Rice, *London, 1860.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.



10. "A Gentleman with his Hookah Burdar, or Pipe Bearer".
Hand-coloured aquatint engraving by J.H. Clark and C. Dubourg after Sir Charles D'Oyly from the latter's The European in India, *London, 1813.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.
"The Hookah apparatus consists of the glass . . . which should be two-thirds filled with clear water. The snake, or pliant tube, is about ten feet long . . . At one end a mouth-piece of agate . . . and the other end fastens to a bamboo tube, which joins in another that is immersed in the water about three inches: on this last stands an earthen receiver . . . [for] the tabacco, made into a cake by means of molasses, plantains, &c." (Text to the print by Captain Williamson).

The favourite was claret, or "loll shrub" as it was called with affection. From the beginning of the English experience in India, claret was generally considered an excellent spirit, good for fevers, indigestion, in fact, for any malaise. But, failing claret, there was also "burnt wine", "burnt champagne", brandy and beer. For the lesser ranks, there was arrack and wines from Shiraz, and, for the budget-minded, a medium-priced champagne was sold under the brand name of "Bahut Acha".

In the early days, hot drinks were the order of the day as they were considered more suitable to the climate. There was also no ice to be had. But things changed as memsahibs filtered in with their memories of ices and sherbets. Coolness became the key to enjoyment. The English dug "ice pits", made "ice boxes", built "ice houses" and formed "ice clubs" (and wondered why they fell prey to fevers). One reads treatises on freezing ice-creams to perfection and on cooling drinks with saltpetre and Glauber's salt. There was even an "Abdar" in every proper household, a servant whose sole job was to keep food and drink cool.

All this food and drink went down very well. So well, in fact, that comportment at table was dubious in the extreme. Dinner party protocol did indeed require that the host and hostess join each of their guests in a toast. But this sort of generous hospitality led to unusual behaviour. During elegant eighteenth-century dinners, for example, it was fashionable for the members of Calcutta's élite to bombard one another with tiny pellets made by rolling the bread from the table. Quite à la mode for some time, this frivolity ended abruptly when one aggrieved party, sorely wounded in the eye, challenged his tormentor to a duel. Such whims cannot, of course, be compared with the account of a dinner party in Surat, a couple of centuries earlier. On that occasion the host, a Mughal governor, "far gone in his cups," ordered his dancing girls to be decapitated before the startled eyes of his English guests.

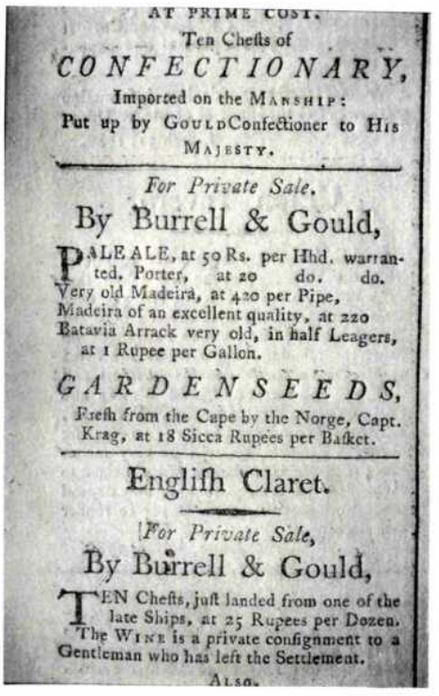
But to return to the dinner parties with the memsahib. If "mem" joined her man
Fig. 10 for a peg now and then, she also joined him in the earlier days for a "quiet hookah" after dinner. "The mixture of sweet-scented Persian tobacco, sweet herbs, coarse sugar, spices, etc. which they inhale by means of a long tube or snake, comes through clean water and is so very pleasant that many ladies take the tube and draw a little of the smoke into their mouths," noted one account in 1867.

One likes to imagine a dinner party ending on this placid and pleasurable note, as opposed to duels provoked by the launching of bread pellets or the lamentable spectacle of all the guests snoring at table, as reported of a Bombay occasion.

As more and more English families in India sought to eat familiar foods from their homeland, imports appeared in all shapes and forms to answer their needs. Arab caravans from Kabul brought apples "insipid," says Fanny Parks, "but grateful to the eye." European ships brought "tankards of English beer, bottles of French wine, slices
Fig. 11 of Dutch cheese," and announcements in the paper advertised "pickles and herrings, vinegar, oil and mustard." Much of this was available to the privileged memsahibs in the comfort of their own homes. Either it was ordered through the efficient "*khidmutgar*" or delivered by the merchant himself.

As the urban centres grew and prospered, however, merchandising of the imported foodstuffs moved out of the home. Borah pedlars roamed Bombay with imported delicacies in their trunks. Eurasians and Jews were quick to open stores full of imported goods. Known as "ruination shops", they carried the "caramels, chocolates and cakes for tea" so dear to the English palate.

Not all of it was especially fresh. Here and there in memoirs one finds mention of "salad oil bottled for many years like crusty old port" or "hermetically sealed fish that have been out of their native element for a lustrum or more."



AT PRIME COST.
Ten Chefts of
CONFECTIONARY,
Imported on the MANSHIP:
Put up by GOULDConfectioner to His MAJESTY.

For Private Sale.
By Burrell & Gould,

PALE ALE, at 50 Rs. per Hhd. warranted. Porter, at 20 do. do.
Very old Madeira, at 420 per Pipe,
Madeira of an excellent quality, at 220
Batavia Arrack very old, in half Leagers, at 1 Rupee per Gallon.

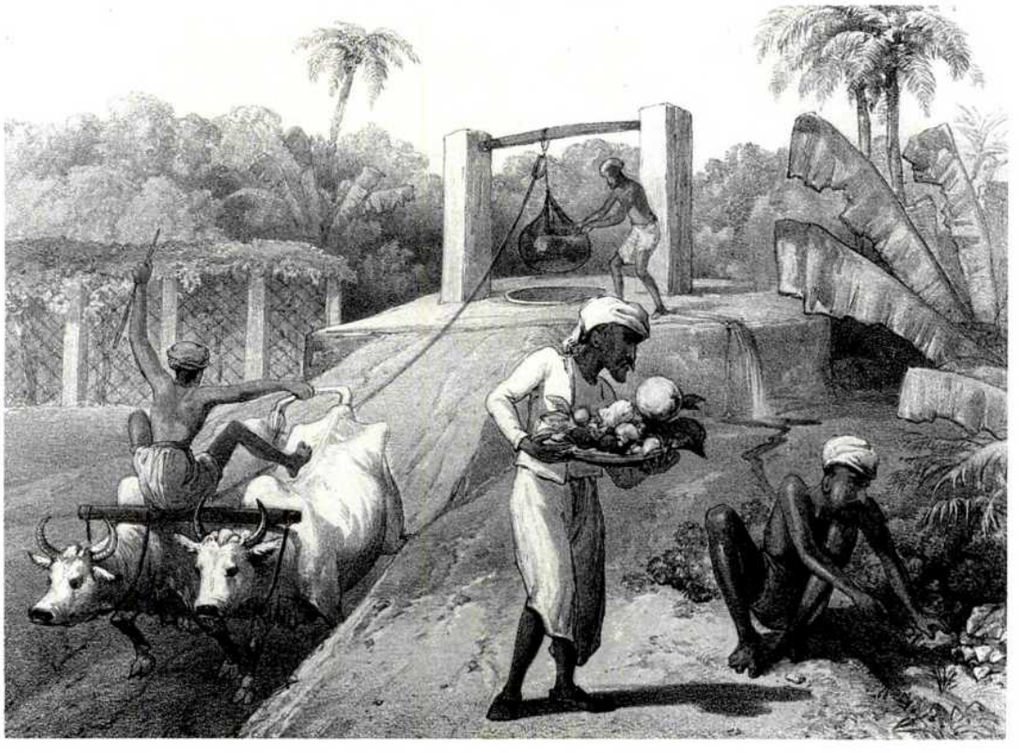
GARDENSEEDS,
Freſh from the Cape by the Norge, Capt. Krag, at 18 Sicca Rupees per Baſket.

Engliſh Claret.

For Private Sale,
By Burrell & Gould,

TEN Chefts, juſt landed from one of the late Ships, at 25 Rupees per Dozen.
The WINE is a private conſignment to a Gentleman who has left the Settlement.
ALSO.

11. Advertisement from the Calcutta Gazette *in 1788.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.



12. "Our Garden".
Lithograph by F. Jones after Captain George Francklin Atkinson, from his Curry and Rice, *London, 1860.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

Complaints of "tinny" meals are easy to find. No wonder whoever could manage it put in their own English vegetable garden, "marrow fat peas, as fine as in England and the watercress . . . [these] were pearls beyond price." Fanny Parks even records a certain Sultan Kushru's garden "cultivated in the English fashion, seeds are given *Fig. 12* to the 'malis' and prizes awarded for the best vegetable dalis." One wonders what he did with them—broccoli biryanis? Still, it shows the extent to which the idea had caught on.

Even better than one's own "bageecha" was fleeing to the nearest hill station. A visitor to Ooty in 1847 was in raptures: "you luxuriate in the cool air. Your appetite improved. The mutton had a flavour which you did not recollect in India. Strange, yet true, the beef was tender. You praised the vegetables and fell into ecstasy at the sight of peaches, guavas and raspberries after years of plantains, guavas and sweet limes." Another chronicler reports that salmon from Scotland was available in Simla. And so it went on.

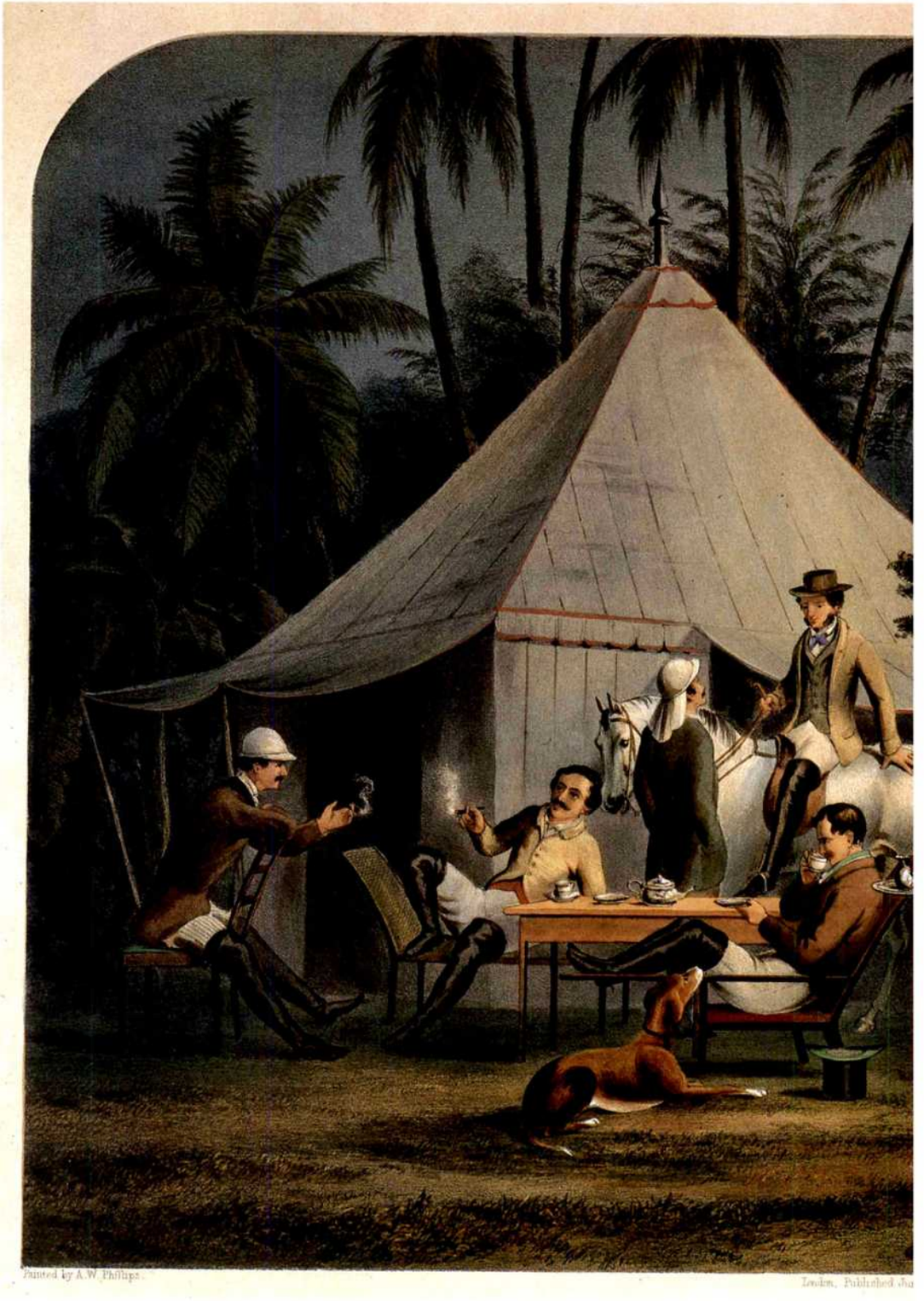
Figs. 13-15 Anything associated with cool temperatures was much sought after. Perhaps because it took place in the cool of the morning, breakfast was the favourite meal of the British in India. A relaxed, friendly, relatively informal meal, "chota hazari", according to Flora Annie Steel, was a time when "it is at least not necessary to have a tribe of servants dancing around the table ready to snatch your plate at the least pause." She was not the only one to rhapsodize about breakfast. Another account extols it as a meal "conceived in large and liberal spirit. We pass from dish to dish through all the compass of a banquet, the diapason closing full in beer." Yet another portrays "the lady descending from her room in the studied negligee of a fashionable morning toilette and passing to the breakfast table through the marshalled ranks of her retinue of servants, all bowing low as she passes." The sahibs praised breakfast as the best meal of the day. It was often the only one which husband and wife shared "alone". Helen Mackenzie, in Ludhiana, even rode on an elephant to join her husband for "chota hazari in the cool of the morning."

By all accounts, breakfast was a favourite rivalled only by tea, as a social occasion. From the earliest days of the British in India, their routine lent itself to these preferences. This involved being up before daybreak, riding until eight; breakfast, then straight to the Public Offices, where one "wrote hard" until two or three. A long lunch was next on the agenda. During the early days, this was followed by a siesta, after which the hairdresser appeared to touch up his master's wig. This was later amended to a siesta followed by visits and tea. Tea was not to be confused with tiffin, which was lunch in those days.

The very concept of tea as a pause in the day, seems to have come with the British. The earliest English travellers mention it in their memoirs as an absolute necessity to life: "a change of clothes, a tiny box of tea, a canister of sugar and of sago. . ." are some of the items Honoria Lawrence took along in her palki for the road.

Looking at illustrations of such events makes one even more keenly aware of the realities so vividly described in these diaries and memoirs, intermingled as they were with other events. As James Macintosh vividly recalled when he described the morning routine of a late eighteenth-century Company servant in Bengal, "About the hour of seven in the morning, his durwan opens the gate and the viranda is free to his circars, peons, hurcarrahs, orchubdars, houccaburdars and consumahs, writers and solicitors. The head bearer and jemmadar enter the hall and his bedroom at eight o'clock . . . . The moment the master throws his legs out of bed, the whole force is waiting to rush into his room, each making three salaams . . . . In about half and hour after undoing and taking off his long drawers, a clean shirt, breeches, stockings, and slippers are put on his body, thighs, legs and feet, without any greater exertion on

13. "The Breakfast".
Coloured lithograph by J. Bouvier after a drawing by William Tayler from the latter's Sketches illustrating the manners and customs of the Indians and Anglo-Indians, *London, 1842.*
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.
"Our young friends are now united, and are seated at breakfast during the honeymoon. The old Khansaman and the little Kidmutgar are still seen attending their master and mistress. . . . Fried fish and rice, the characteristic materials of an Indian breakfast, are conspicuous on the table. A plate of Sylhet oranges shews that it is the cold season, which accounts for the silk dress and cloth coat of the couple, the carpet over the mat, and the absence of the Punkah." (Text to the print).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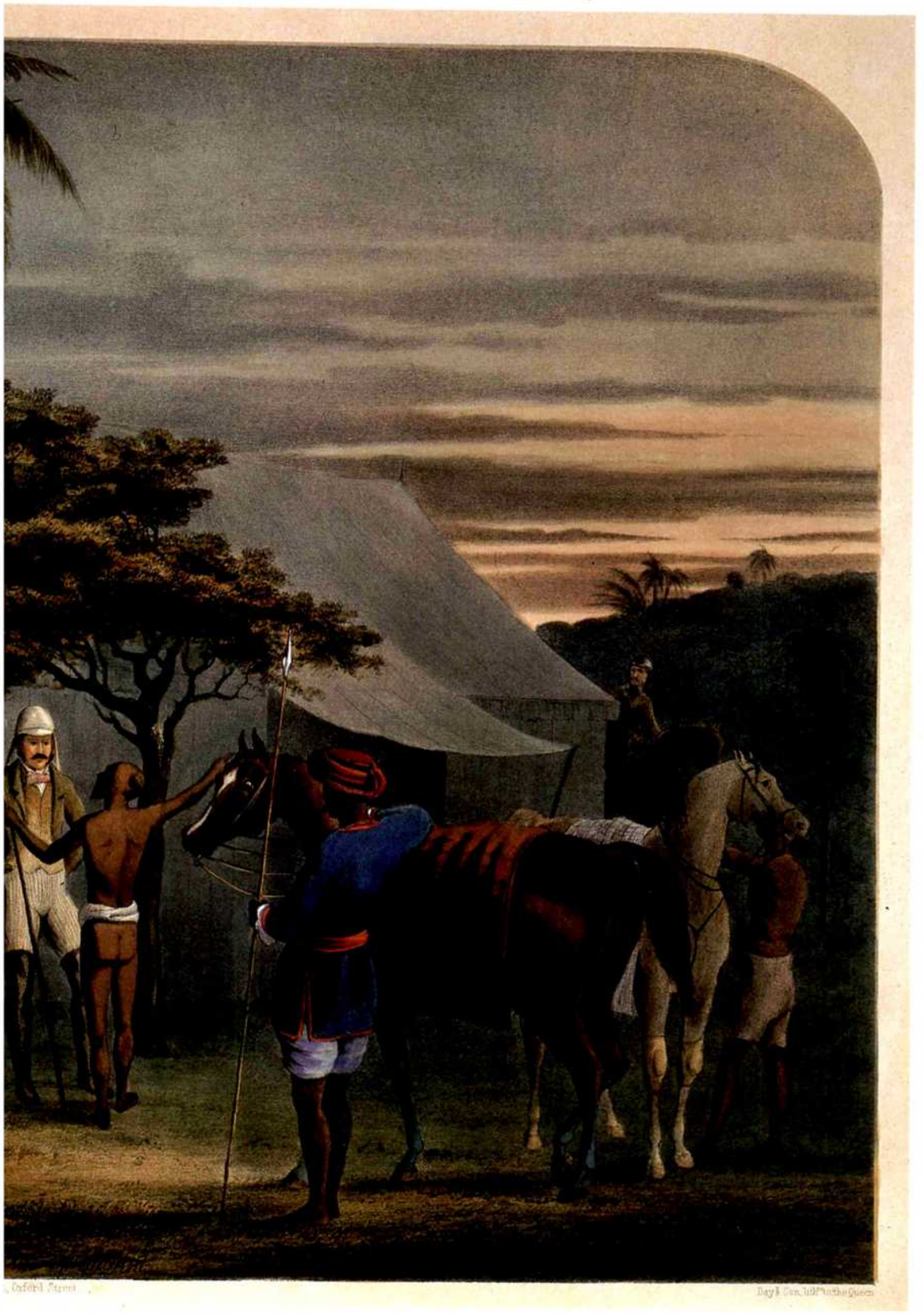
London, Published Ju



14. "The early repast".
Chromo-lithograph by Day & Son, from a set of four, illustrating a day's pig-sticking in the Madras Presidency, after paintings by Alexander W. Phillips, London, 1851.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

15. "A Coffee Party after Parade at a Military Station in India".
Coloured lithograph by Messrs. Fores (Sporting Repository, 41 Picadilly) after Philip C. Trench, London, c. 1850.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.
The party includes officers of the Bengal Army (from right to left): of the Horse Artillery, Light Cavalry, two from the Native Infantry and one from the Irregular Cavalry Regiment.

his own part than if he were a statue. The barber enters, shaves him, cuts his nails, and cleans his ears . . . . The superior then walks in state to his breakfasting parlour in his waistcoat; is seated; the consumah makes and pours out his tea, and presents him with a plate of bread or toast. The hair-dresser comes behind and begins his operation, while the houccaburdar softly slips the upper end of the snake or tube of the hucca into his hand; while the hair-dresser is doing his duty, the gentleman is eating, sipping and smoking by turns."

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49

SOME MONUMENTS OF OLD MADRAS

S. MUTHIAH AND PAULINE ROHATGI

Exactly three hundred and fifty years ago this year, a narrow strip of land on the Coromandel coast was leased to an Englishman, Francis Day. At the same time, he was granted certain privileges, including permission to build a settlement, by the local Nayak of Poonamalee, for trading purposes. Day, who was then Chief of the East India Company's factory at Armagon, about one-hundred kilometres up the coast, could hardly have foreseen that this strip was to develop into one of India's premier cities.

Fort St George

In 1639, Day began to construct a fortified factory on the site granted to him. Situated near the fishing village of Madrasapatam, the area was about six kilometres long and almost three kilometres wide with the sea on one side and what later became the Cooum River on another. Within a short time, Andrew Cogan, another Company Agent, arrived on the scene and the new settlement was soon granted official recognition by the East India Company. It was named Fort St George and became the Company's main settlement on the Coromandel Coast.

Fort St George is the oldest of the three former British Presidency settlements and it survives with many of its early structures still enclosed by the old fortifications. As compared with the new Fort William in Calcutta, to which access is only possible with permission, Fort St George may be seen by the general public. The walls, bastions and gateways of the Bombay Fort were demolished in the latter half of the nineteenth century and its moat was filled up, with the result that the area, now a central and commercial part of the city, has lost some of its early character. In addition, the precincts of Fort St George are isolated from the busy metropolis of Madras, since there is no main thoroughfare within the Fort. Thus the relatively quiet streets, the remaining neo-classical buildings and the old Presidency Church of St Mary still recall much of the Fort's former atmosphere and status.

The Governor's official residence was originally Fort House and, also enclosed by walls, it became the most important structure within the Fort. John Fryer, a doctor who visited it in 1673, noted its appearance: "As the Fort looked upon the water it appeared a place of good force. The outwork is walled with stone to a good height, thick enough to blunt a cannon-bullet. The Governor's House in the middle overlooks

all, slanting diagonally with the court. Entering the garrison at the Out-Gate towards the sea, a path of broad polished stones spreads the way to pass the second guard into the fort at a humble gate."

The Fort and its Environs

At first, the settlement was little more than this fortified enclosure. As time went on, the nearby villages including Triplicane, Egmore, Ennore, Vepery and Mylapore (whose names are now familiar localities), were acquired and the future of Madras seemed assured. While the British were establishing their boundaries, the various Indian and other communities were developing the area immediately to the north of the Fort, which was likewise enclosed by walls.

Views of the fort in the seventeenth century are extremely rare and it is mainly from contemporary descriptions by people like Fryer and the few surviving early maps, that one can gain a visual impression of the Fort and its coastal surroundings. Some idea of the topographical appearance of Fort St George and the environs of Madras during the following decades, however, may be gleaned from a study of the prints that were published in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

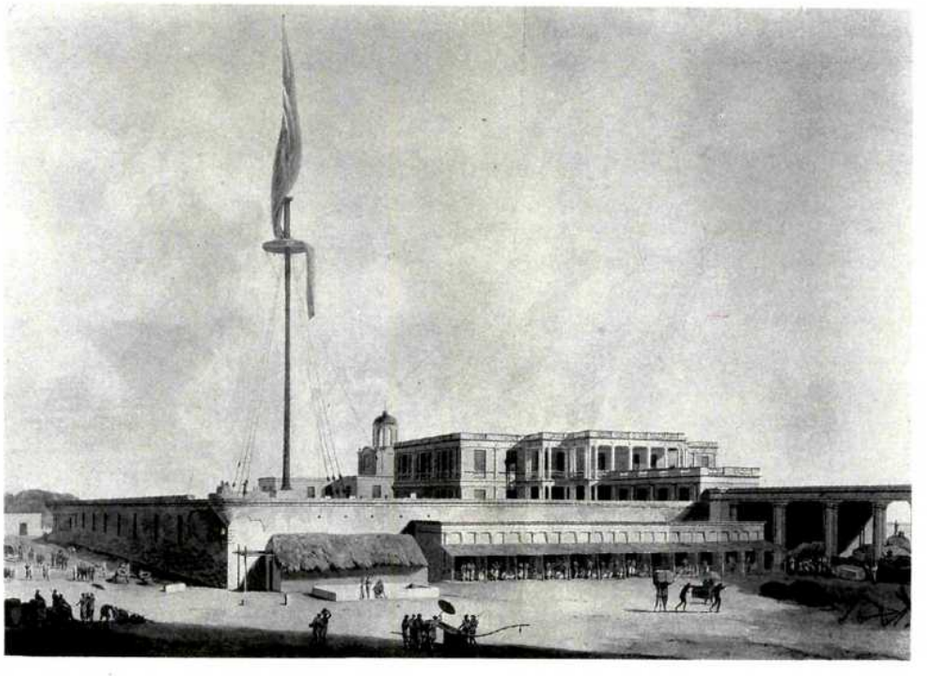
Fig. 1 A scene by Thomas Daniell from *Oriental Scenery*, is one of the most vivid prints of Madras ever published. Towards the end of their long stay in India, and after they had toured the southern regions, Thomas and his nephew, William, spent several weeks in Madras before sailing to Bombay in mid-February 1793. Their view, as described by the artists themselves, was taken from "the beach southward of the Fort of Madras; the larger building to the right of the flag-staff is the new exchange, and the higher one to the left is the church, to which a spire has been added since the taking of this view in the year 1793." Their viewpoint was the present-day Marina beach lying to the south of the Fort.

By the time the Daniells arrived, Fort St George had undergone a number of changes. Extensive renovations had already taken place long before the settlement celebrated its first centenary. The old Fort House was replaced with a new Government House, which became the nucleus of today's Secretariat. As early as Governor Thomas Pitt's appointment, at the end of the seventeenth century, gardens were developed outside the Fort. They included a great avenue of trees in the grounds of his country residence which was located to the south of the Fort on the island formed by the loop of the Cooum River. As Pitt explained: "My leisure time I generally spend on gardening and planting, and making such improvements which will I hope be much to the Company's advantage and the good of the whole place."

In the first half of the eighteenth century, during which there were threats of invasion and a French occupation, many modifications were made to the Fort. One of the earliest was the creation of Fort Square by Governor Harrison in 1711. The tower with its cupola marking its western entrance and the tower of St Mary's Church were dominant landmarks for many decades. New buildings that followed included a number of structures such as the King's Barracks erected for military personnel and the Exchange mentioned by the Daniells (now the Fort Museum). The last major work on the Fort took place in the 1770s, during the Governorship of Lord Pigot, and apart from some recent changes, much that can be seen today dates from his time.

Fig. 2 Another of the Daniells' prints shows the imposing Government House as it appeared in the late eighteenth century. In this building, as they explained, "the business of the English East India Company is transacted, but the residence of the

1. "South east view of Fort St George, Madras".
Hand-coloured aquatint engraving by Thomas and William Daniell after an original drawing by Thomas Daniell, London, 1797.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.



2. "The Government House, Fort St George".
Hand-coloured aquatint engraving by Thomas and William Daniell after an original drawing by Thomas Daniell, London, 1798.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

Governors is at a distance of a mile and a quarter from Madras. The colonnade to the right leads down to the sea gate, where merchandise of various kinds is seen continually passing to and from the roads." The scene not only shows the tower and cupola of Fort Square in the distance but it also includes a rare glimpse of the colonnade of Pallavaram gneiss pillars which had been removed from this site to Pondicherry by the French in 1746. Some thirty years before the Daniells reached Madras, however, the pillars were recovered and re-erected in the Fort. Today, they may still be seen adorning the Secretariat, for many of them were incorporated in the façade of this building when renovations took place in 1910.

The entire series of 144 aquatints comprising the Daniells' *Oriental Scenery* was published in parts between 1795 and 1808. The six views of Madras and its environs, which appeared in part two between September 1797 and September 1798, are engraved by both Thomas and William after original drawings made by Thomas.

Landing at Madras

For more than two centuries, arrival by sea at Madras was the same for all. East Indiamen had to anchor in the roads at the mercy of treacherous currents and unpredictable winds. Passengers, goods and even livestock were transferred to the shore by masulas. As one commentator observed: "The boatmen waited for a big wave, came in on the crest of it till it was spent and paddled hard to get past the breaking place of the next wave, so as to be carried by it right up to the beach."

The Daniells' description of their general view taken from the beach continues: "In the distance is seen part of the Madras roads; and in the foreground the sea breaking in with its usual turbulency on this coast; the only vessels in use for passing through this surge to communicate with the shipping, are called Massoola boats. They are flat bottomed, and built without iron, the planks being sewed together with line made from the outer coat of the cocoa nut." Only these vessels and their accompanying catamarans could endure the surf of the Coromandel coast. In those early days, landing took place on the beach outside Fort St George, which people entered by the Sea Gate and its adjoining colonnade leading to Government House.

Scenes of the Fort by Francis Swain Ward (1736-1794)

Early views within the Fort are particularly rare and, for this reason, the engravings after paintings by Francis Swain Ward are especially significant topographical records. He first arrived at Madras in 1757 as a cadet in the East India Company, having abandoned his career as a professional landscape painter in London. Although he did not practise officially as an artist in India, he sketched many noted sites during extensive tours with his regiment. He also painted a series of finished oils, especially during his second term of service between 1773 and 1794, when he died at Negapatam. A number of his pictures were acquired by Richard Chase, who was Mayor of Madras in 1800, and a selection of paintings from this collection was published in London as aquatints between 1802 and 1805. Issued by the London publisher, Edward Orme, as *Twenty-four views in Hindostan*, they include six views of Madras.

Fig. 3 One of the views was taken by Ward from the King's Barracks (which still survive), and the text explains the scene: "This view in Fort St George, shows in the foreground on the left hand side, the west face of the King's Barracks; the low buildings or sheds on each side of the gateway are appropriated for places of confinement for the

3. "A view from the King's Barracks, Fort St George".
Hand-coloured aquatint engraving by J. B. Harraden after Francis Swain Ward, London, 1804.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

4. "Fort Square, from the south side of the Parade, Fort St. George".
Hand-coloured aquatint engraving by Joseph C. Stadler after Francis Swain Ward, London, 1805.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

disorderly part of the soldiery.... The cupola at the end of the barracks belongs to Fort Square. It had once an excellent clock, which was of great service to the Settlement, but it has long since been taken down. The tower of the Church [St Mary's] is seen beyond it, and the chimnies of the Fort Square kitchen on one
Fig. 4 side of it." This group of prints also includes a close-up view of the clock tower and cupola seen from the south side of the Parade Ground.

The elegant neo-classical houses with their projecting porticoes, typical residences
Fig. 5 of the more affluent Company servants, are portrayed in two of the prints. Ward's view along North Street [Middle Street] looking towards Middle Gate, recalls the description by Fryer of about a century earlier: "The streets are sweet and clean, ranked with fine mansions, of no extraordinary height (because a garrison town) though the beauty which they conciliate, by the battlements and terrace walks on every house, and rows of trees before their doors, whose Italian porticoes make no ordinary conveyance into their houses...." His other view, showing San Thomé Street, includes the east end of St Mary's Church.

The results of a survey by a civil engineer, Captain W. Ravenshaw, published in 1822, exhibit the extent to which Madras had developed by then. In particular, the series of mainly commercial buildings along the beach road to the north of the Fort, are shown as completed. Extending northwards, they include the premises of Messrs. Parry and Dare, a Granary and the Company's timber yard. Next to this, is the spacious Bentinck's Buildings, named after Lord William Bentinck, Governor of Madras. Between this and the Board of Trade, the King's Marine Yard is shown with
Fig. 6 the Sea Custom House next door. A lithograph dating from the mid-1820s by J. R. Maxwell after a painting by John Gantz, shows the two-storeyed Board of Trade building distinguished by its bow-fronted façade and handsome crowning balustrade. Extending beyond it is the plainer Custom House, opposite to which masulas are shown landing on the beach. At that time and until the harbour was constructed, the sea came right up to this North Beach Road.

George Town

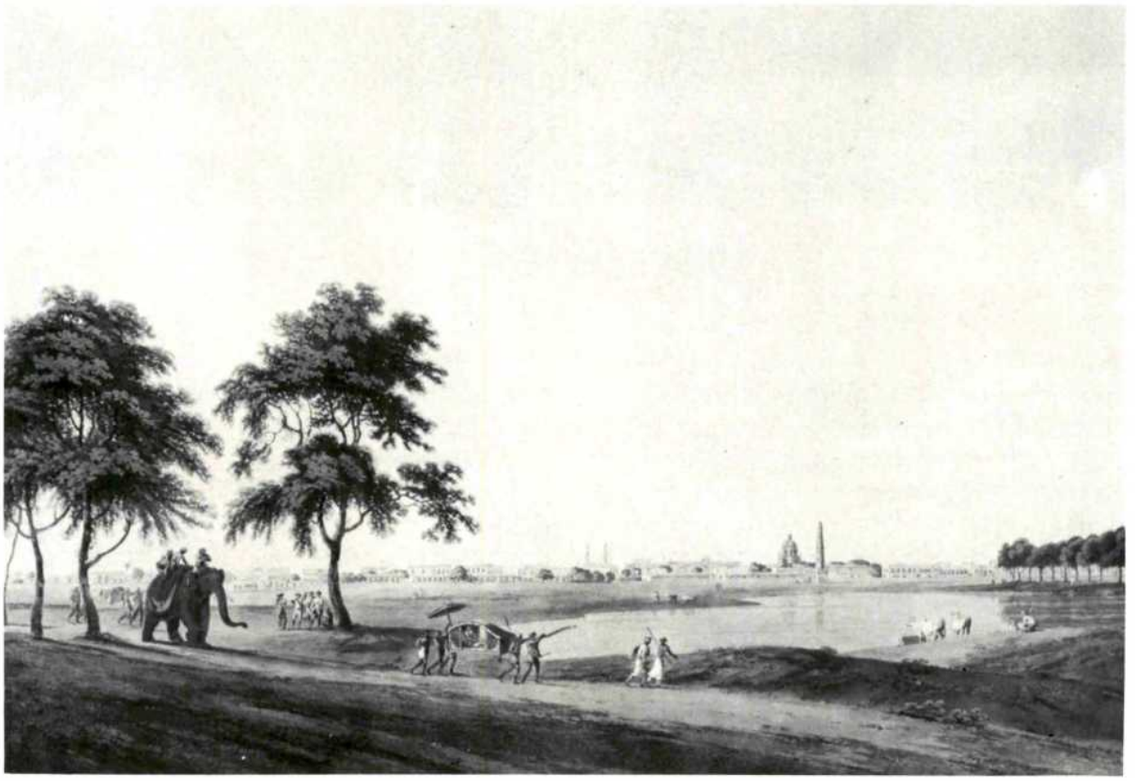
Behind the range of buildings along this sea front was the main town, later named George Town in honour of King George V. Originally adjoining Fort St George, it was redeveloped on a site further north in the eighteenth century. The Daniells
Fig. 7 included a distant view as seen from the west in *Oriental Scenery*. Several existing landmarks dominate the skyline of the town, which they described as "being principally the residence of the native merchants [and] distant rather less than half a mile north from Fort St George, and separated by the Esplanade; along which runs the China Bazar, or market for Chinese, Indian, and European merchandise. In the town, the Armenians have erected a church, which appears in the distance, and to the left of it are seen the minarets of a handsome Mosque, built by Mahommed Ali, Nabob of the Carnatic." The Armenian Church, another well-preserved monument of the past, was consecrated in 1772.

Churches and Chapels of Madras

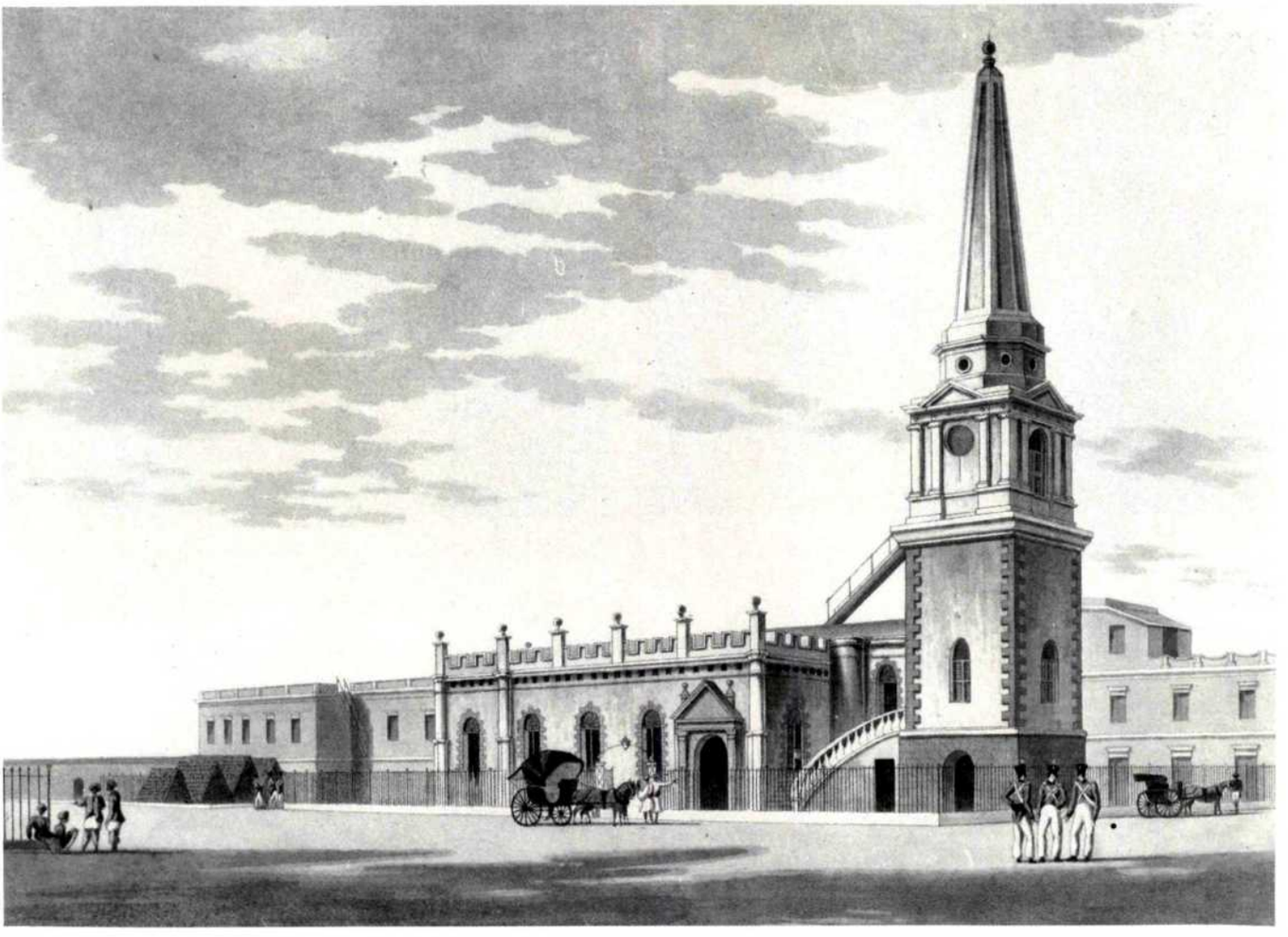
A profusion of architectural gems survives among the churches and small chapels to be found in the residential areas of the city. St Mary's Church in Fort St George abounds in history and is the best known of them all, for whenever its bells ring,

5. "A view in the North Street |Middle Street| of Fort St George".
Hand-coloured aquatint engraving by J. B. Harraden after Francis Swain Ward, London, 1805.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

6. "View of the Board of Trade Offices Custom House at |North Beach Road|, Madras".
Hand-coloured lithograph by J.R. Maxwell after John Gantz, Madras, c. 1825.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.



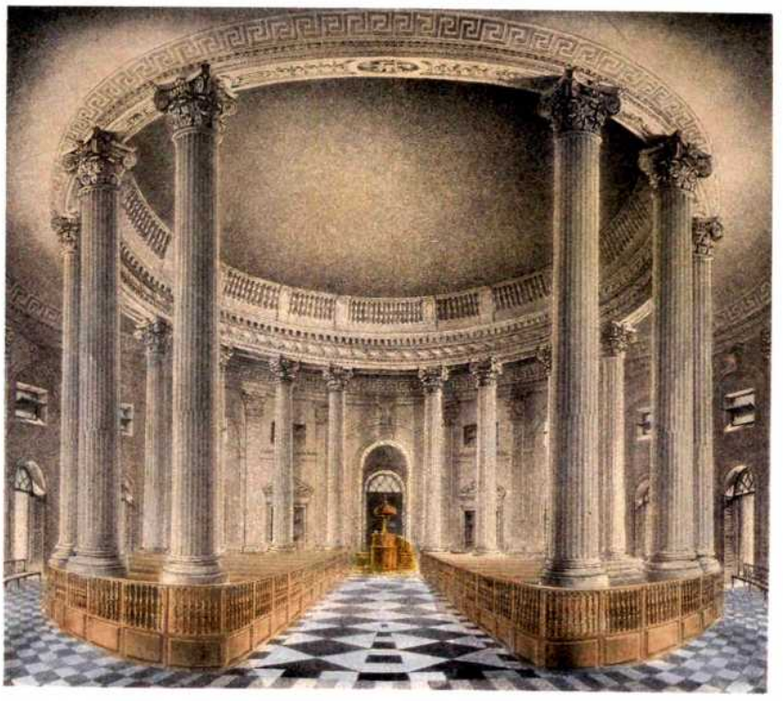
7. "Part of the Black Town |later George Town|, Madras".
Hand-coloured aquatint engraving by Thomas and William Daniell after an original drawing by Thomas Daniell, London, 1797.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.



8. "St Mary's Church", Fort St George.
Hand-coloured aquatint engraving by and after Julius Walter Gantz, Madras, 1841.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

they resound in a building which was consecrated more than 300 years ago. Many of its worshippers achieved fame, others acquired fortunes and a few found both. This roll of honour includes the names of Streynsham Master, Elihu Yale, Job Charnock, Thomas Pitt, Robert Clive (and his son, Edward), Stringer Lawrence, Warren Hastings, Marquess Cornwallis, Thomas Munro and many others. Statues, busts and memorials of East India Company officials adorn the aisles and walls, while the churchyard is paved with more than a hundred early gravestones.

The original church building, with its arched roof and sturdy outer walls survives largely unchanged despite renovations. Wood was used only for the doors, windows and for the ornate Governor's gallery, which once extended across the full width of the church. The detached tower of 1701 was linked to the main building about sixty years later, when the exterior curved flight of steps was constructed to provide direct access to the Governor's private gallery within the church. The steeple was built in 1795, two years after the Daniells' visit. Both this and the steps to the Governor's
Fig. 8 gallery are clearly shown in the print by Julius Walter Gantz, which was published in 1841, and they appear much the same today.



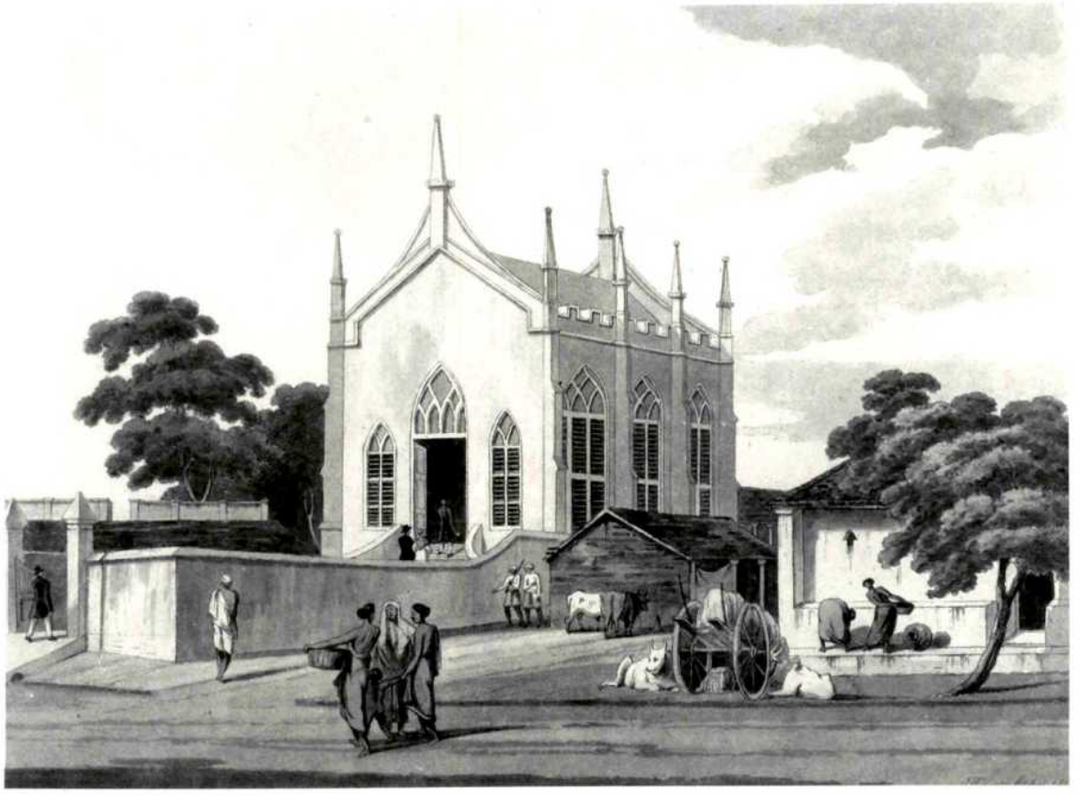
9. "View of the interior of St Andrew's Church, Madras".
Coloured lithograph by J.R. Maxwell after John Gantz, Madras, c. 1825.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

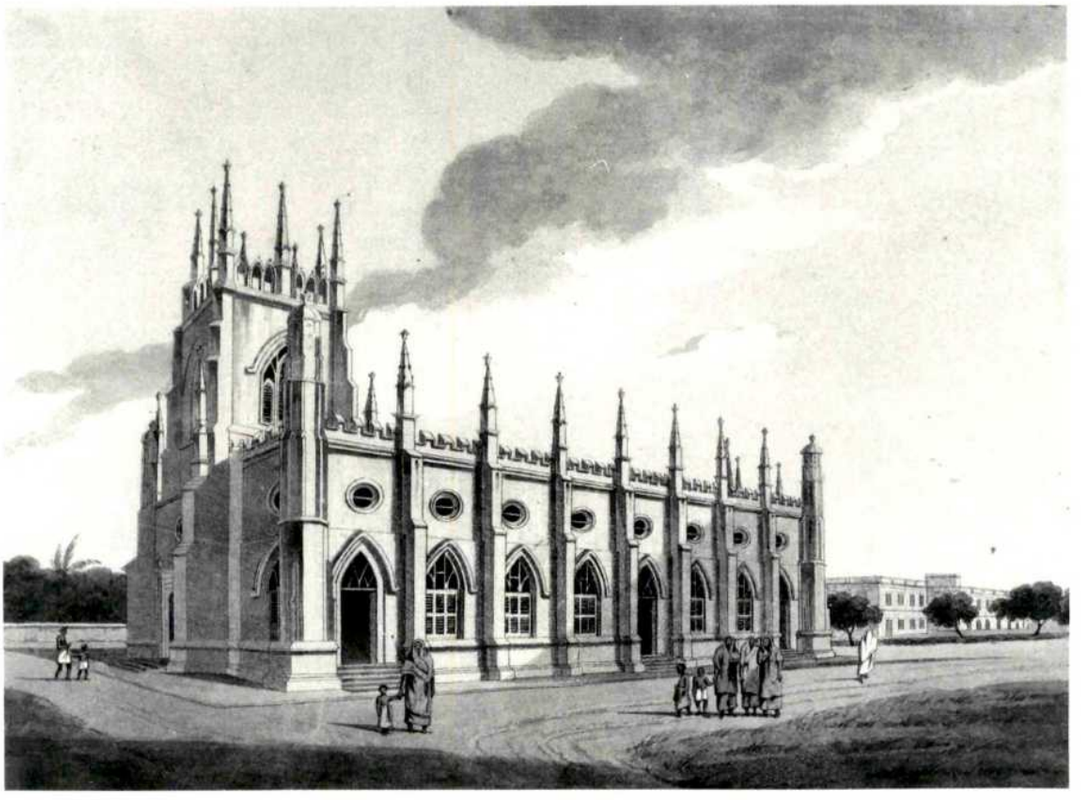
10. "St Andrew's Church".
Coloured aquatint engraving with etching by Julius Walter Gantz, after John Gantz, Madras, 1841.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

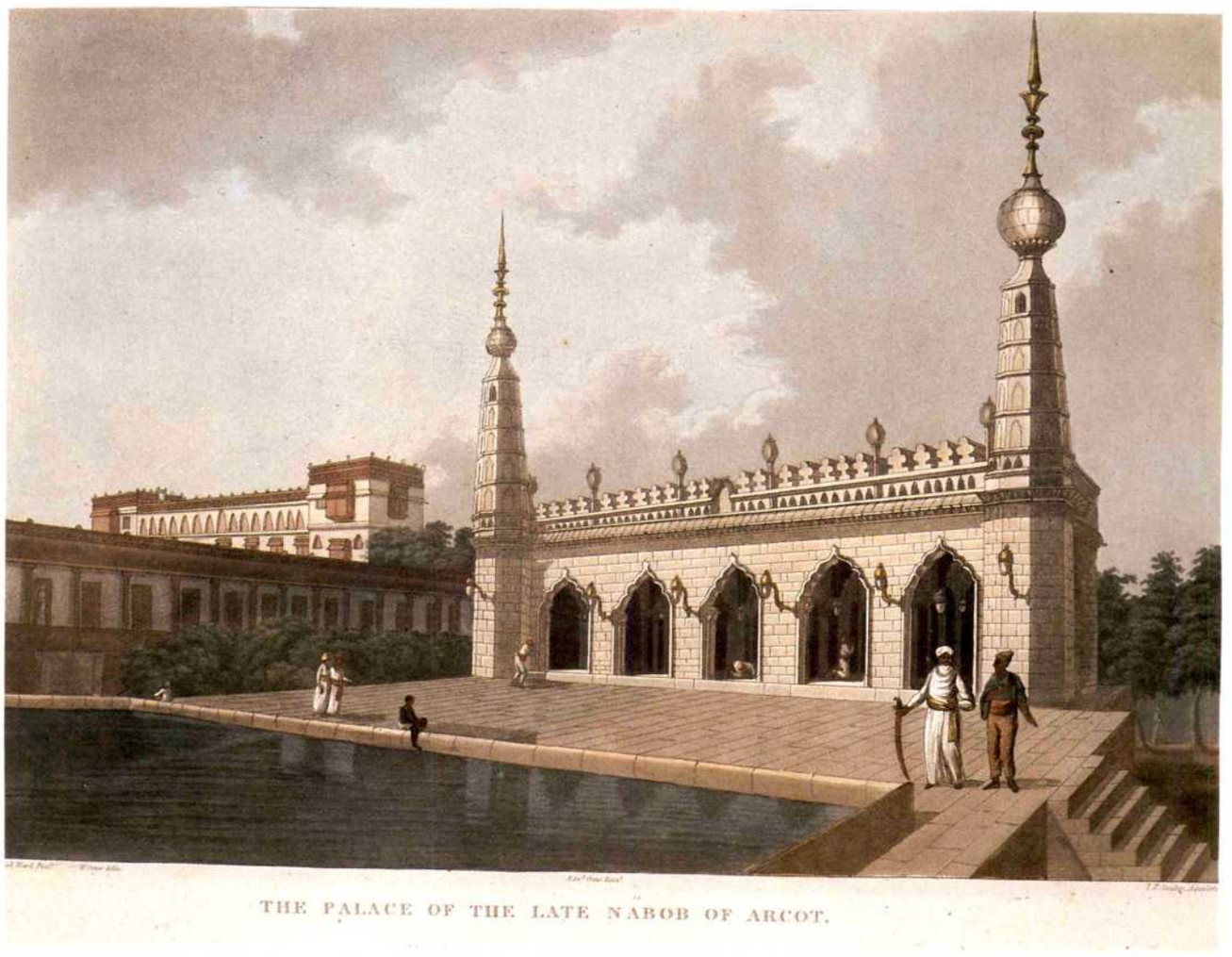
11-13. "Church Mission Chapel", "Trinity Chapel" and "Vepery Church". Coloured aquatint engravings by and after Julius Walter Gantz, Madras, 1841. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

The aquatint by Gantz of St Mary's Church is one of a series of prints of Madras churches. Julius Walter was the younger son of John Gantz who is thought to have been of Austrian origin. In the early nineteenth century, John Gantz had an architectural practice in Madras. During the 1820s, he and his elder son, Justinian, set up a private lithographic press in Popham's Broadway, still a major thoroughfare in George Town. Somewhat later, Julius Walter also joined the family's printing establishment, which appears to have continued to flourish for several decades.

The Gantz family were also professional topographical painters in water-colour, an activity which was probably connected with their architectural work. A number of paintings survive showing views of the environs of the Fort, especially of the new buildings. Their press in Popham's Broadway may have been set up partly because their views were becoming increasingly popular and in demand by the general public. For instance, one of the aquatints from the 1841 set by Julius Walter was engraved from an original drawing made much earlier by his father.



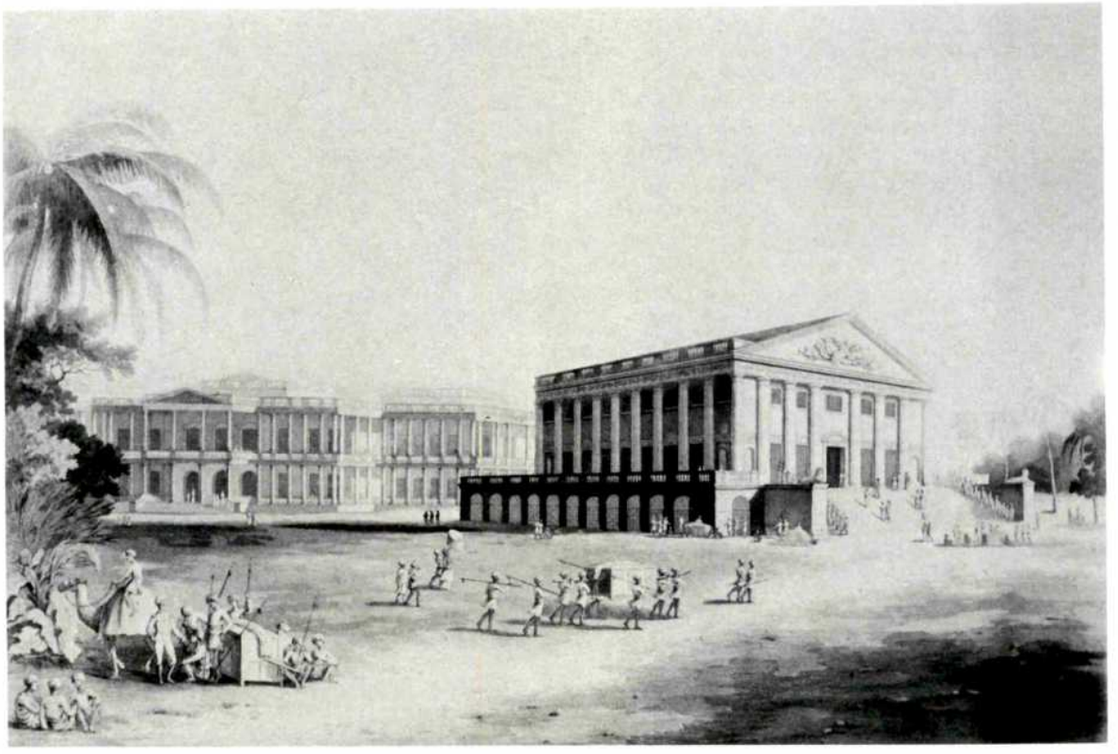




14. "The Palace [and Tomb] of the late Nabob of Arcot".
Hand-coloured aquatint engraving by Joseph C. Stadler after Francis Swain Ward, London, 1803.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

St Andrew's Church

During the rapid growth and expansion of Madras in the early decades of the nineteenth century, many fine neo-classical and neo-Gothic structures were erected. They include public administrative buildings, churches, small chapels and garden houses. Two new churches were built: St George's near Mount Road was consecrated in 1816 and St Andrew's near Poonamallee High Road at Egmore was ready for worship about four years later. The architect of St Andrew's, Thomas Fiott de Havilland, was responsible for the actual construction, but not the design, of St George's. Both churches followed the pattern of the fashionable London churches of James Gibbs. The designs of his churches had been published in Gibbs' *Book of architecture* in 1728, and they became prototypes for many colonial churches.



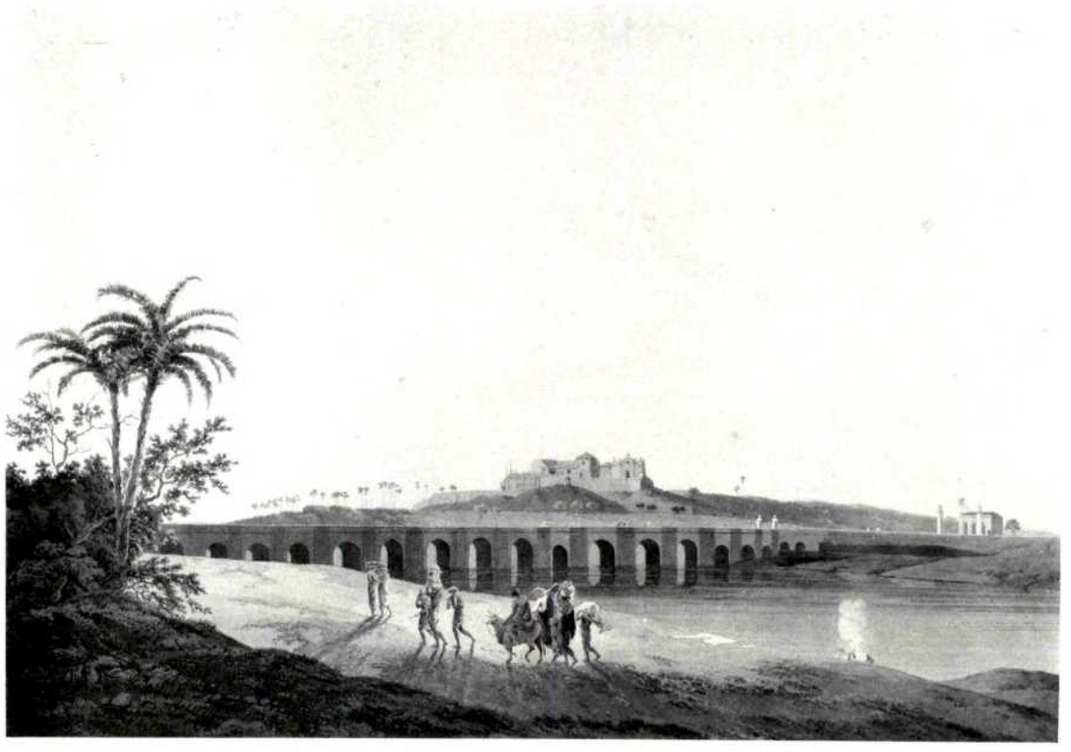
15. "A view of the Government House and Council Chamber Madras".
Coloured aquatint with etching engraved by H. Merke, perhaps after an original drawing by John Goldingham, London, 1807.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

That Thomas de Havilland was proud of St Andrew's is evident from his book, *An account of Saint Andrew's Church and Bridge, Madras*, which was published in the city in about 1825. It includes a number of lithographs and engravings of the church by J. R. Maxwell after paintings by John Gantz. One view shows the exterior, others show elevations and details of the ornate decorations. The elegant and unusual domed interior, supported on a circle of fluted columns with richly carved composite capitals, is portrayed in one of the illustrations. *Fig. 9*

In 1841, a painting similar to that of the exterior by John Gantz in this book, was engraved and published by Julius Walter Gantz. It shows St Andrew's within spacious grounds, which still surround the church, but the distant views of St Mary's steeple in the Fort (on the left) and the Cooum River with the Pantheon Road bridge (on the right) are no longer visible due to subsequent development. The same set of prints of ecclesiastical buildings includes a few of the neo-classical and neo-Gothic chapels still standing in their shaded compounds. *Fig. 10* *Figs. 11-13*

Chepauk Palace

Besides the "handsome Mosque" in George Town, Muhammad Ali, Nawab of Arcot (later Nawab of the Carnatic), built Chepauk Palace in about 1768. Its extensive grounds originally bordered the south beach until the coast road (South Beach Road along the Marina Promenade) was constructed. Francis Swain Ward's view shows the top of this imposing building, and as noted in the text; "The foreground of this view *Fig. 14*

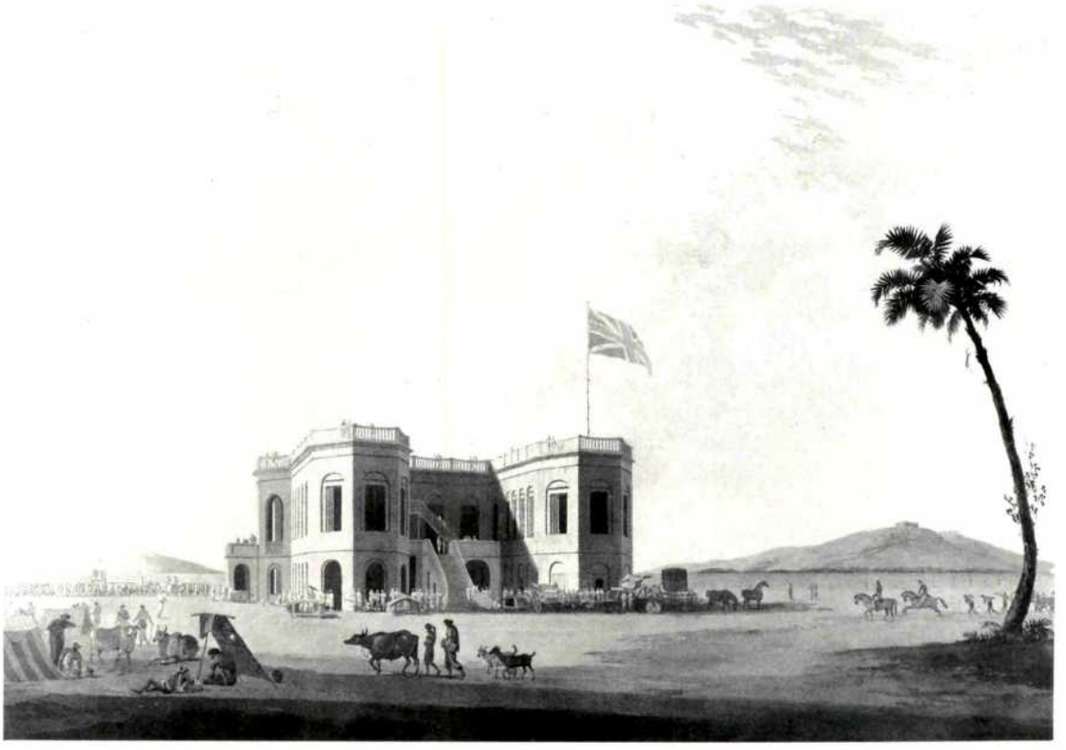


16. "The Armenian Bridge, near St Thomas's Mount, Madras".
Hand-coloured aquatint engraving by Thomas and William Daniell after an original drawing by Thomas Daniell, London, 1798.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

is enriched by a superb tomb, built over the body of the late Nabob." This is identified as the present-day Big (Wallajah) Mosque which was built in 1795, the year of Muhammad Ali's death. Chepauk Palace consisted of two blocks, both of which appear in the picture: the two-storeyed building is the Kalsa Mahal, while the single-storeyed structure, visible beyond the tank, is the Humayun Mahal. The palace complex (now various Government offices) owes its Indo-Saracenic appearance today to Robert Fellowes Chisholm who made additions and alterations in the 1870s. By this time the home of Muhammad Ali and his descendants had been acquired by the Government. Chisholm, who was then Consulting Architect at Madras, was responsible for a number of major projects in the city.

New Government House and Banqueting Hall

Although the various houses used by the Governors were located both inside and outside the Fort for many decades, it was not until Edward, the second Lord Clive, became Governor of Madras in 1798, that a suitable building was created for the purpose. John Goldingham was appointed Civil Engineer to the Presidency in 1800 and one of his first tasks was to enlarge the Triplicane Garden House. This was already set in a park bordering the Cooum River to the south of the island. No doubt with the grandeur of the Nawab's Chepauk Palace in mind, Goldingham designed an elaborate two-storeyed neo-classical building. He was also commissioned to design the Banqueting Hall as a completely new construction. Using the design and archi-



17. "The Assembly Rooms on the Race Ground, near Madras".
Hand-coloured aquatint engraving by Thomas and William Daniell after an original by Thomas Daniell, London, 1798.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

tectural features of a classical Greek or Roman temple, the result was a stately structure (now the Rajaji Hall). It was opened with great ceremony in 1802. The print published by Edward Orme in 1807, which shows both these buildings, may have been *Fig. 15* engraved from an original drawing by the architect. It was partly due to his extravagant building programme that Lord Clive, like the Governor-General Marquess Wellesley at about the same time, was recalled to London by the Company's Directors. As part of the same series of prints, which was dedicated to Wellesley, Orme also published a scene of his new and grandiose Government House at Calcutta, perhaps in an attempt to justify the spendthrift reputation of both the Governor and the Governor-General.

An Historic Bridge

"On the road from Madras to St Thomas's Mount," the Daniells noted, "is the *Fig. 16* Armenian Bridge, extended over the river Meilapoor [Mylapore, now the Adyar River]; though narrow, it is, including its causeway, four hundred and ten yards, and has twenty-nine arches, perhaps not judiciously constructed, and at present of irregular dimensions, owing to the frequent repairs it has undergone in consequence of inundations. The distant building on an eminence called the Little Mount was formerly a convent in the occupation of respectable Roman Catholics."

The bridge, originally an ancient causeway, was built in 1726 by the Armenian merchant and benefactor, Coja Petrus Uscan. He was also responsible for the flight

of steps leading to St Thomas' Mount, situated not far away. This bridge at Saidapet on Mount Road, which still exists although the river is often dry, is also known as the Marmalong or Saidapet Bridge.

The Old Assembly Rooms

One would have crossed this bridge to reach the Race Course and Assembly Rooms at Guindy, which survived until quite recently. The scene of many an entertainment from the late eighteenth century onwards, its former glory may be observed in another
Fig. 17 of the Daniells' views, which they also described: "The Race Ground is between seven and eight miles from Madras, and near to St Thomas' Mount, which, in this view, appears on the right of the Assembly Rooms. The races are supported by English gentlemen resident in Madras, and its neighbourhood. This amusement takes place in the cool season, when the ladies of the settlement are invited to a splendid ball."

Unfortunately Madras, like all growing cities in the world today, is unable to escape the development and rebuilding programmes that are a feature of the present decade. It is, therefore, all the more significant to recall the past and its surviving monuments, and to examine pictures of them as they appeared in their heyday.

One of the most vivid eighteenth-century descriptions came from the pen of William Hodges, the professional landscape painter, who arrived at Madras from England in 1780. Events of the second Mysore war largely confined him to the Fort and he sketched little, but after returning to London, he published his impressions: "The English town, rising from within Fort St George, has from the sea a rich and beautiful appearance . . . . The stile of the buildings is in general handsome. They consist of long colonades, with open porticoes, and flat roofs, and offer to the eye an appearance similar to what we may conceive of a Grecian city in the age of Alexander. The clear blue cloudless sky, the polished white buildings, and the bright sandy beach, and the dark green sea, present a combination totally new to the eye of an Englishman just arrived from London, who, accustomed to the sight of rolling masses of clouds floating in a damp atmosphere, cannot but contemplate the difference with delight."

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65

A GALLERY OF GOVERNORS-GENERAL

PHEROZA GODREJ

The aim of this essay is to present glimpses of the careers of some of the early British rulers of India. It is illustrated with their portraits which were painted during their lifetime and also published as prints in further recognition of their services.

From the late 1760s onwards, when the first professional British portrait painter, Tilly Kettle, went to India, portraiture became increasingly fashionable and lucrative. Patrons among the Indian noblemen and the British communities were forthcoming, and the vogue lasted for several decades.

In England, painters and sculptors were often officially commissioned, for example, by the East India Company for portraits in oils, statues or busts of its Governors-General and other leaders. In addition to single portraits, paintings commemorating a particular treaty, a political or a military event were executed. These were then displayed in the Company's headquarters, East India House in Leadenhall Street or in the Government Houses, Town Halls and Court Houses of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Many more paintings, and portraits in particular, were commissioned by the individuals who were employed by the Company.

As stability grew, a prosperous middle class developed in the Presidency cities. There was a pride in the achievements of the leaders, who were extending British influence and increasing the prosperity of the East India Company. The inhabitants subscribed for portraits of almost all the leading officials from the latter half of the eighteenth century, and many of them were also engraved or lithographed.

In India especially, in due course, large size portraits were found to be cumbersome to move. They were also liable to suffer from the climate and were expensive to frame. Ultimately, the market for them became limited. Prints of portraits, on the other hand, increased in popularity, especially as pictures for homes.

At the head of the early British trading settlements or factories, was the Governor. His responsibilities were generally political, commercial and military. He was Chairman of a Council which consisted of councillors or senior merchants, many of whom were committed to private commerce which was sometimes linked to the Company's trade. Each man had usually risen through the post of Writer, Factor, junior then senior Merchant, to his position on the Council. As many of them hoped in due course to succeed as Governors, ambition and self-esteem united with strong independence made them assertive, egoistical and, at times, obstinate people. Each was motivated by thoughts of Empire building, whether for personal gain, for the benefit of the Company, or a combination of both.

Robert Clive (Governor of Bengal 1758-1760 and 1765-1767)

By the time Robert Clive arrived in India in 1744, war had already broken out between England and France. This was soon reflected in the Indian settlements. Born in 1725 of a Shropshire family, Clive, even at school, was known more for his adventurous and leadership qualities than for any scholarly inclinations. He was nominated to a Writer's post in the Company's establishment at Madras. He found life at Fort St George restricting and attempted suicide, but subsequently decided that "fate must be reserving me for some purpose, to fulfill, some future scheme of God."

Two years later, he displayed exceptional bravery during the siege of Madras by the French Admiral La Bourdonnais. His military talents impressed the authorities and earned him an Ensign's commission. From then onwards, Clive went from strength to strength. His defeat of Chanda Sahib, the Nawab of Arcot, and subsequent defence of the capital established his reputation as a military leader.

Before returning to England in 1753, Clive married Margaret Maskelyne at St Mary's Church in Fort St George. Their eldest son, Edward, who was born the following year, later became Governor of Madras. Clive was acclaimed by the Directors of the East India Company, who saw in him a rare combination of military and commercial talents. He returned to India in 1756, and soon after his arrival, Calcutta fell to the Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-Daula. On receipt of the news in Madras, Clive was selected to lead the British troops against Siraj-ud-Daula's army and he sailed with Admiral Watson's fleet to the Hooghly.

Although Clive retook Calcutta, only a temporary peace prevailed. The Nawab continued to intrigue with the French and threatened the British settlement. Clive signed a treaty with Mir Jafar by which this slighted minister agreed to betray the Nawab. As a result of the decisive battle of Plassey in 1757, Mir Jafar was installed in place of Siraj-ud-Daula and Clive became Governor of Bengal in 1758.

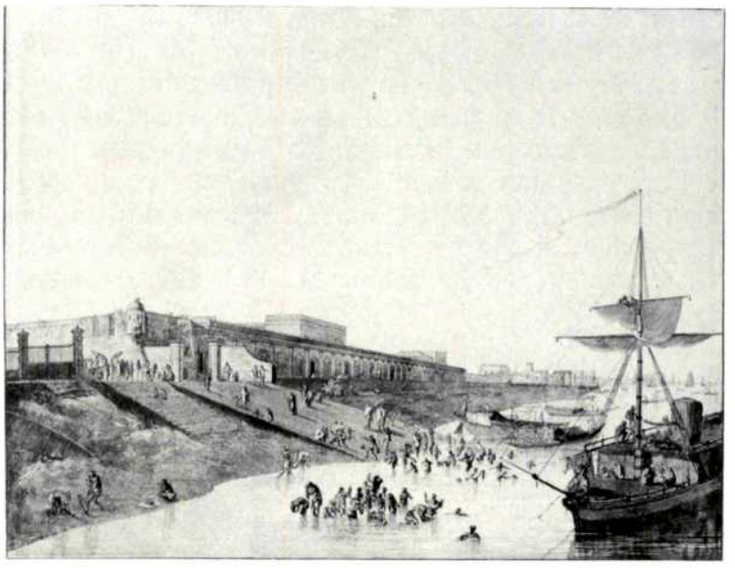
In 1760, Clive again returned to England. He was designated Baron Clive, of Plassey by George III. During his absence from India, corruption and unrest continued to disrupt British trade. Remittances from Bengal had fallen and Mir Kasim, son-in-law and successor of Mir Jafar, was overthrown. In 1764, Clive was asked to return to Calcutta, this time as both Governor and Commander-in-Chief. On landing in May 1765, he went to Allahabad. By the Treaty of Allahabad, the fate of much of northern India was sealed. Oudh was made into a buffer state against Maratha encroachments and Shujah-ud-Daula was reinstated as its ruler.

One outcome of this was the grant of the *diwani* of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to Clive, by the Mughal Emperor, Shah Alam II. This gave the Company the power of collecting revenue and of administering civil justice. It signified the first landmark in the direct control of Bengal by the Company.

In addition, Clive examined the Company's own administration policies. In order to eradicate the practice of illicit profits through privateering, he formed a Society of Trade by which Company servants received regular salaries and shares according to rank. He also attempted to regularize allowances for the troops. Out of a legacy from Mir Jafar, Clive created a charity, the "Clive Fund", for disabled soldiers and their families.

By the time Clive retired from India in 1767, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were among the richer provinces, along with the Deccan and Madras. He had confirmed the Company's presence in India and he returned to England in a blaze of glory.

Episodes of his life in India were painted by leading artists of his day, while Gainsborough, Reynolds and Nathaniel Dance painted his portrait. Several versions



1. View of the old Fort William, the River Hooghly and shipping, at Calcutta.
Aquatint engraving by and after Thomas Daniell, Calcutta, 1787.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.
The old Fort William, seen in the print from the River Hooghly, contained the offices and residence of the Governor of Bengal, and was the first headquarters of the East India Company in Calcutta. By the time the print was published, the building was used as the Customs House.

2. "Lord Clive" (1725-1774).
Stipple engraving by Francesco Bartolozzi after Nathaniel Dance, London, 1788.
India Office Library and Records,
The British Library, London.

of the Dance portrait exist. The oil in the Powis Collection (Edward had married the daughter of the Earl of Powis) was painted in about 1770. The picture was engraved
Fig. 2 by the Italian, Francesco Bartolozzi, who was Engraver to the King. It was published in London in 1788, after Clive's death. It shows Clive standing, wearing the Order of the Bath, against a background that is thought to represent the battle of Plassey.

Clive's career from soldier to statesman had been conducted with increasing integrity. Although there were Parliamentary enquiries into his alleged policies of intrigue and personal financial gain, his services were generally recognized. Nevertheless, worn out by this treatment and his failing health, Clive took his own life before he was fifty years old.

Warren Hastings (Governor of Bengal 1772-1774 and Governor-General 1774-1785)

Born in 1732 at Churchill in Oxfordshire, Warren Hastings was educated at Westminster. In contrast with Clive, he showed considerable scholarship. In 1750, he was nominated to a clerkship in the East India Company's service and was appointed to the Company's trading post at Murshidabad. Here he married the widow of Captain Buchannan, but she died a few years later. During the period of intrigue before the battle of Plassey, Hastings was imprisoned at Murshidabad by Siraj-ud-Daula. Upon his release and after the recapture of Calcutta, Clive appointed him Resident at Murshidabad. In 1761, he was made a Member of Council in Calcutta, first under John Zephaniah Holwell who was acting Governor after Clive's departure for England, and then under Henry Vansittart.

After about five years in England, Hastings was nominated second in Council at Madras in 1769. He subsequently married Marian, the Baroness von Imhoff, whom he had met during the outward voyage. In 1772, Hastings himself became Governor of Bengal. Hastings revised the entire revenue and judicial administration. He also had the conduct of a number of his senior officials investigated. In England in 1773, Lord North's Regulating Act was passed, by which a Governor-General of Bengal, along with four councillors named in the Act, were appointed to administer British possessions in India. The Governor-General was given authority over the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay. Calcutta thus became the effective capital. Hastings assumed the official role of Governor-General in 1774.

His councillors were Sir John Clavering, Colonel Monson, Philip Francis and Richard Barwell. Largely as a result of prejudices on the part of his Council members, Hastings was outvoted on many issues and this period of office for him was fraught with disagreements. In 1775, Raja Nand Kumar accused him of accepting a bribe, whereupon Hastings retaliated by accusing Nand Kumar of conspiracy. While this was pending, Nand Kumar was arrested on another charge, tried by the Supreme Court and hanged. The other incident, for which Hastings is remembered, is his duel with Philip Francis, during which the latter was wounded. This took place in 1780, after he had accused Francis of faithlessness and dishonour.

The security of the Company's possessions was increasingly threatened, especially by the Marathas. Hastings' foreign policy was to eliminate French power in India and to subjugate the local rulers. After the death of Shujah-ud-Daula, in order to strengthen the buffer state of Oudh, Hastings assisted his successor, Asaf-ud-Daula, in conquering the neighbouring Rohilla country. He thereby ensured that the western frontier was buttressed against the Marathas by a ring of Muslim states.

Hastings was also interested in Indian culture. This was partly in order to appreciate traditions on which to base administrative reforms. He knew Persian,

3. "Warren Hastings Esqr." (1732-1818).
Mezzotint engraving by Thomas Watson after Sir Joshua Reynolds, London, 1777.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

the diplomatic language, besides Bengali and Urdu. He encouraged scholars like William Wilkins and Nathaniel Halhed, and he supported the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal by Sir William Jones in 1784.

In 1785, Hastings returned to England, like Clive before him, with a considerable fortune. He found that his old adversary, Sir Philip Francis, had stirred up opposition in Parliament and at East India House. In 1787, he was impeached by the House of Commons and his trial began before the House of Lords in the following year. By the time it ended seven years later (the longest trial to date), Hastings, who was aquitted, had spent most of his fortune.

In India, Hastings was also a generous patron of many British artists. He was painted at least three times by Tilly Kettle. John Zoffany, who reached India in 1783, painted both him and his wife, Marian, while Arthur William Devis also received commissions.

Even before Hastings was appointed Governor of Bengal, during his visit to England in the 1760s, Joshua Reynolds painted his portrait. The original is in the
Fig.3 National Portrait Gallery, London. In 1777, the painting was engraved by Thomas Watson and published in London. It became one of this mezzotint engraver's most esteemed works. It portrays Hastings seated, elegant, with an air of confidence and natural dignity.

The range of portraits in oil, sculptures, drawings and prints made during Hastings' lifetime is considerable. An examination of them in succession conveys the increasing hardships that he encountered, the growing sensitivity perhaps and finally the despair of a man disgraced. Towards the end of his life, he wrote: "I gave you all, and you have rewarded me with confiscation, disgrace and a life of impeachment." In this youthful study of Hastings after Reynolds, however, there is nothing in his expression that conveys the difficulties he was to face.

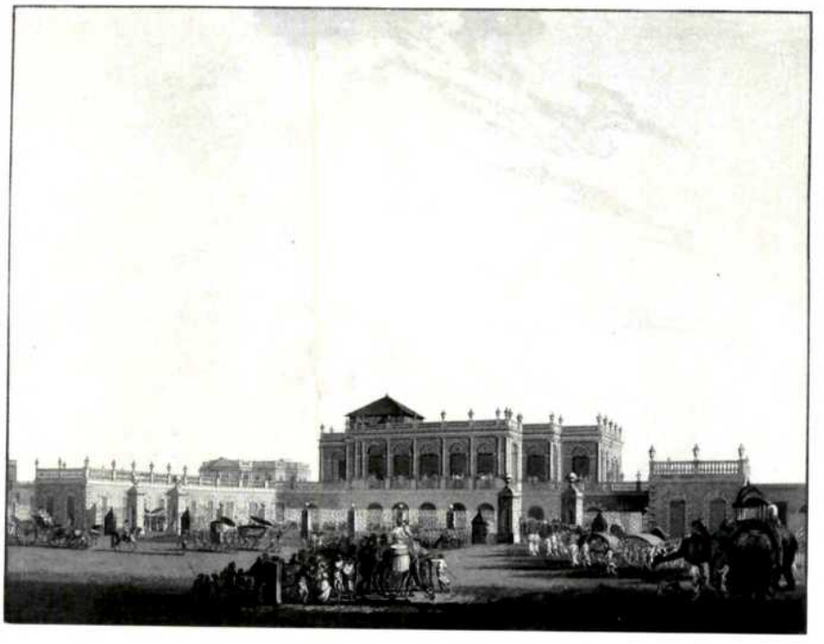
Marquess Cornwallis (Governor-General 1786-1793 and 1805)

When, in 1782, Lord Cornwallis was asked to be Governor-General, he refused saying he saw no reason for "being disgraced to all eternity to fight Nabob princes, his own Council and the Supreme Government." He only consented when a subsequent act gave the Governor-General authority to operate in cases of emergency without the concurrence or even the opinion of his Council. Cornwallis was in a stronger position than Warren Hastings. He not only came from an aristocratic Irish family, but was also a favourite of the King. He had already had a distinguished career before reluctantly accepting the combined position of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief in India in 1786. He was also guided by the experience of John Shore, an early ally of Warren Hastings, who was himself to become Governor-General after Cornwallis.

His first military campaign was the third Mysore war, as a result of which Tipu Sultan surrendered, and as part of the treaty, two of Tipu's sons were handed over as hostages to Lord Cornwallis. The successful conclusion in 1792 of the Mysore campaign was hailed in Calcutta with much rejoicing. On his return to the capital, he was presented with an address from the inhabitants asking him to sit for his portrait. It was to be put on public display. The commission was entrusted to Arthur William Devis who completed it by the end of April 1793. At a public meeting, it was decided
Fig. 4 to hang the painting in Government House. The life-size portrait shows Cornwallis standing in a tent, with a view of the Fort of Seringapatam in the distance. It also includes groups of Indian and British soldiers standing on the plain.

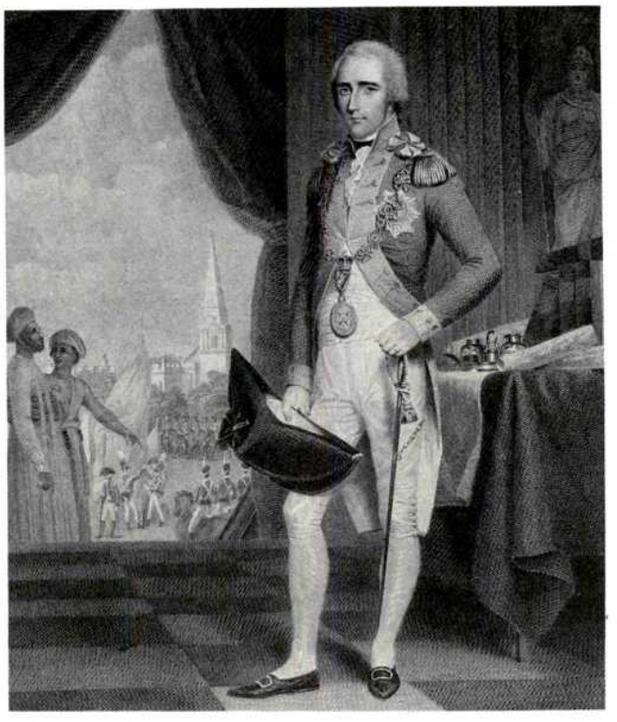
Henry Hudson, who had arrived in Calcutta in November 1793, was one of the few portrait engravers working in the city. Proposals for publishing Devis' portrait were announced very soon after his arrival. According to the *Calcutta Gazette* of January 11, 1794, where he advertised his mezzotint of Devis' portrait of Warren Hastings, Hudson appears to have set up a press in his own house in Tank Square. His print
Fig. 5 of Hastings was published in August 1794 and that of Cornwallis appears to have been issued in November the same year. Devis' portrait of Cornwallis hung for many years in Government House and is still in Calcutta, now the property of the Government of India.

The permanent settlement of the land revenues of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa was another important contribution of Cornwallis. To give the province security in taxes and tenures, a perpetual settlement of assessment was proclaimed. The duties of Revenue Collector and Judge were separated and Boards of Revenue were instituted.



4. View of the Government House, Calcutta.
Aquatint engraving by and after Thomas Daniell, Calcutta, 1788.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.
This Government House on Esplanade Row replaced the old one in Fort William during the 1760s.

5. "Marquess Cornwallis" (1738-1805).
Mezzotint engraving by Henry Hudson after Arthur William Devis, Calcutta, 1794.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.



6. "Marquis Wellesley" (1760-1842).
Line-engraving by James Heath after Robert Home, London, 1807.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

Local criminal courts were established, and extensive reforms were carried out throughout the civil and military services of the Company's establishments. Cornwallis despised corruption and was anxious to prevent private trading by the Company's civil employees. He also regulated the relative positions of the Sepoy officers in the English regiments. For these services, Cornwallis was made a Marquess, and in late 1793 he returned to England after seven years in India.

In 1805, Marquess Cornwallis was persuaded to return to India as Governor-General in order to settle the excesses of Marquess Wellesley. He arrived in Calcutta in July at the age of sixty-seven, but fell ill and died the same year at Ghazipur.

Marquess Wellesley (Governor-General 1798-1805)

When Richard Colley Wellesley (Lord Mornington) assumed the office of Governor-General in 1798, he found that the non-intervention policies of Cornwallis and Shore had resulted in a precarious position of the Company's territories. The army was badly organized and financial resources were dwindling.

Born in 1760, he was the eldest son of the Earl of Mornington. His younger brother, Arthur Wellesley (later the Duke of Wellington), became his prime military adviser in India. The first to feel the iron hand of the Governor-General was Tipu Sultan, and as a result of this successful campaign, he was made Marquess.

In the meantime, Wellesley had commissioned Charles Wyatt of the Bengal
Figs. 7, 8 Engineers to design a new Government House, more suitable to his position. The result, as is well known, was the palatial building overlooking the *maidan* in Calcutta.

7. The new Government House (commissioned by Marquess Wellesley) from the east, Calcutta.
Coloured aquatint engraving by Robert Havell junior, after James Baillie Fraser, London, 1824.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

8. The new Government House (commissioned by Marquess Wellesley) from St Andrew's Library in Old Court House Street, Calcutta.
Coloured lithograph by W. Robert Dickinson and Lowes Dickinson after Sir Charles D'Oyly, London, 1848.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

Following the final campaign at Seringapatam, Wellesley turned his attention to the Marathas. He found their rulers intriguing against one another. After regaining British supremacy in Oudh in 1801, he forced the Peshwa at Poona to surrender, following the practice of divide and rule. General Lake, who was commanding in the north, took Delhi and Agra, while Shah Alam had to ask for British protection.

Having arrived in India at the age of thirty-seven, imperious and with boundless ambition, the changes Wellesley brought about were epoch-making. His strategy was simple: all traces of French influence had to be removed, and in order to avoid any other footholds, he established a pattern of war, diplomacy and subsequent agreement by treaty. However, the expenses of war (and the cost of his new Government House) increased to such an extent that the Directors in London began to find the Governor-General and his soldier brother much too extravagant. Both were recalled in 1805. During the few years in India, Wellesley had converted the East India Company from a trading concern into an imperial and political power. He had also changed the image of the Governor-General from that of a glorified merchant to that of a ruling prince.

Robert Home, who had accompanied Cornwallis' troops during the third campaign in Mysore, had settled in Calcutta and was working as a portrait painter. The *Calcutta Gazette* of June 19, 1800 announced that Home had painted a likeness of the Governor-General and that arrangements were being made for engraving the portrait. On September 6, 1801, the same journal announced that a proof of the engraving had been received, adding that the picture had been sent to England in July 1801. Two months later, it further stated that the prints were ready for delivery to subscribers. However, no engraved portrait after the painting by Home of Wellesley, dated 1801 is known. The print after Home's portrait, by the London engraver,
Fig. 6 James Heath, if it does refer to the same painting, was published in London by Robert Cribb, only in 1807.

After the sudden death of Marquess Cornwallis, Sir John Barlow took over. He was soon succeeded by Lord Minto, who held the position until 1813. During the Governor-Generalship of Minto, who came to India at the age of fifty-six, the British signed treaties with Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler at Lahore. Restricted by orders from waging war on land, he strengthened India's sea frontiers, particularly warding off attacks by pirates from the Persian Gulf and the islands of Malacca.

Marquess Hastings (Governor-General 1814-1823)

The administration of the Marquess of Hastings between 1814 and 1823 was important in further establishing British paramountcy in India. Born in 1754, Francis Rawdon was the eldest son of the Earl of Moira. He was appointed Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief. One of his first tasks was to quell the infiltration of the Gurkhas from Nepal into the territory of Oudh. For the success of the various campaigns, Francis was made Marquess of Hastings. He subdued the Pindaris with their Maratha allies. The Peshwa was deposed and deprived of his territory. The Rajput states of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Mewar, along with several other smaller states including Kutch and Kathiawar, were brought under British protection. By a treaty signed in 1818, all these came under the Bombay Presidency.

Two incidents mar Hastings' rule in India. First, his war with the Marathas was conducted in 1817-1818 against instructions from the East India Company. Secondly, he permitted a large loan to the Nizam of Hyderabad from the English banking firm of Palmer & Co. in Hyderabad. This was contrary to an Act of Parliament

9. "The most noble the Marquess of Hastings" (1754-1826).
Stipple engraving, vignette, by Paul Savignhac after George Chinnery, Calcutta, 1823.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

10. Lord William Bentinck (1774-1839).
Mezzotint engraving by George H. Phillips after Thomas Phillips, London, 1838.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

forbidding such transactions. It caused an even greater scandal as the ward of Hastings had married Sir William Rumsford who was a partner in the firm. The money was misappropriated by the Nizam instead of being put to public use. Stung by aspersions made on him, Hastings returned to England.

He, nevertheless, carried out a number of reforms, during his tenure, which were to have long-term effects. He was the first to admit Eurasians into his government and they were also granted field officers' ranks in the army. Various public works were given more attention.

In 1816, Hastings (who was Grand Master of India and its dependencies) was portrayed by George Chinnery at the request of the Masonic Lodge of Mauritius. Chinnery painted at least two other similar portraits of Hastings, one of which was for the Masons of Bengal. The *Calcutta Gazette* of October 22, 1822 states that an engraving of an oil painting by Chinnery was made from a picture then in the Artillery Mess Room at Dum Dum, near Calcutta. The vignette stipple engraving referred to *Fig. 9* in the *Gazette*, was by P. Savignhac and was published in Calcutta in 1823.

Lord Bentinck (Governor-General 1828-1835)

Between Marquess Hastings and Bentinck, William Pitt (Earl Amherst) came to rule as Governor-General from 1823 to 1828. Besides being responsible for military expeditions, Amherst had also to satisfy the Company's demands for enhanced

11. The Custom House Wharf and River Hooghly, Calcutta.
Coloured lithograph by W. Robert Dickinson and Lowes Dickinson after Sir Charles D'Oyly, London, 1848.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

dividends and to make land revenues in India pay for his own administration. It was in Amherst's time that Simla was chosen as the Government's summer capital.

Born in 1774, the son of the Duke of Portland, Bentinck was not yet thirty when he arrived as Governor of Madras in 1803. He held the position until 1807, when he was recalled by the Directors to London. Many years later, in 1828, the Directors supported his appointment as Governor-General. The post of Commander-in-Chief was added to his responsibilities from 1833. His seven years in India were marked by an advancement in the proceedings of justice and in education. He introduced social reforms. Indians were admitted to the civil service. In order to counteract the deficit after the Burmese war, Bentinck increased land revenue and levied a tax on opium. He made treaties with the rulers of the Punjab and Sind and took over the administration of Coorg.

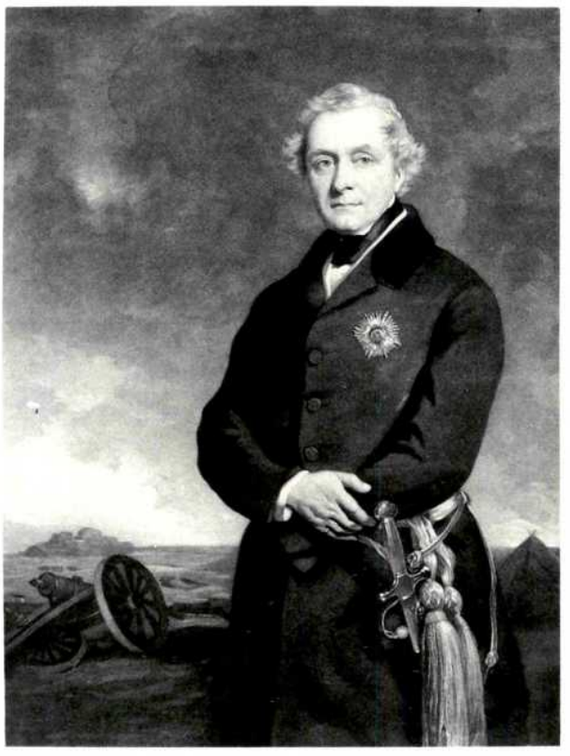
On his return to England, a full-length standing portrait was made by Thomas
Fig. 10 Phillips and was engraved in mezzotint by George H. Phillips and published in 1838.

12. Lord Auckland (1784-1849).
Line and stipple engraving by J. Thomas after Lowes Dickinson, London, 1850.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

Lord Auckland (Governor-General 1836-1842)

Born in 1784, George Eden was the second son of the first Baron Auckland and the nephew of Lord Minto who was appointed Governor-General of India in 1810. After being appointed to the House of Lords on the death of his father, and subsequently holding the office of President of the Board of Trade and then First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Auckland became Governor-General in 1836. He never married and was accompanied by two of his sisters, Fanny and Emily. Their journals and sketches are well known for the light they shed on the social conditions and other aspects of their time. At the time of his arrival, the attentions of the British were turning to Afghanistan where there were two claimants to the throne—Shah Shuja and Dost Muhammad. The latter drove out Shah Shuja only to find that Ranjit Singh had seized Peshawar. Dost Muhammad then applied for British protection. Lord Auckland dared not make an enemy of Ranjit Singh but he was anxious to gain the alliance of Afghanistan against the threat of Russia. After unsuccessful negotiations, Auckland sent an army through Sind into Afghanistan, taking Kandahar, Ghazni and Kabul. Dost Muhammad fled. Although Shah Shuja was appointed Amir, internal dissensions continued to disrupt any chance of peace and only in January 1842, did the Afghans allow British troops to return to India. Without adequate provisions, a severe winter and attacked from all sides, only one man, William Brydon, reached Jalalabad alive. Lord Auckland was made an Earl on the capture of Kabul, but under the weight of these "unparalleled errors and unparalleled disasters," he returned to England. It fell to Lord Ellenborough, the new Governor-General, to restore peace in Afghanistan.

Fig. 12



13. Lord Hardinge (1785-1856).
Mezzotint engraving by John Faed after Sir Francis Grant, London, 1851.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

14. Lord Dalhousie (1812-1860).
Engraving by Thomas Lupton after John Watson Gordon, Edinburgh, n.d.
India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

Viscount Hardinge (Governor-General 1844-1848)

After the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839, relations between Sikh powers and the Empire underwent a sudden change. The only effective power was the Sikh army.

Fig. 13 Born in 1785, Henry Hardinge arrived in Calcutta in 1844 as Governor-General succeeding his brother-in-law, Lord Ellenborough. There was a strong possibility of war with the Sikhs at the time. His eldest son, Charles, who accompanied him as his secretary, is known for the publication, *Recollections of India.* It contains a series of lithographs after sketches by Charles, an amateur artist, that were made during his travels with his father.

After the British defeat in Afghanistan, in December 1845, Sikh armies crossed the Sutlej and invaded British territory. The Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hugh Gough, fought at Mudki, Firozshah and Aliwal. When the Sikhs were defeated at Sobraon and Lahore surrendered in 1846, the first Sikh war ended. Maharajah Dalip Singh, the infant son of Ranjit Singh, was appointed Rajah and a British Resident was placed in the Punjab. Hardinge was made a Peer. By the treaty of December 1846, Sir Henry Lawrence was appointed President of a Council of Regency in the Punjab.

The remaining years of Hardinge's rule in India were devoted to public works. He developed the great irrigation system of the Ganges, supported education, and in continuation of Bentinck's policy, promoted similar social reforms. He also laid down guidelines for the care of ancient monuments. In 1848, at his own request, he was relieved of office.

Lord Dalhousie (Governor-General 1848-1856)

The accession of Dalhousie introduced a new period in the history of India. He was *Fig. 14* not yet thirty-six when he landed in Calcutta. Short, stocky, he had a commanding presence, abounding energy and a temper. Soon after his arrival in 1848, the British were again at war with the Sikhs. After the battles of Chilianwala and Gujarat, their military power was shattered and the Punjab was annexed to British India. Oudh was another of the major states annexed during Dalhousie's term of office.

Dalhousie engaged himself in constant reform. He was the first Governor-General to envisage a modernized India. He appointed a Lieutenant-Governor to administer the overgrown province of Bengal. He set up a Public Works Department, which extended irrigation projects such as the Ganges Canal. He fulfilled Bentinck's ambition to create an additional network of roads, most important of which was the Grand Trunk Road from Calcutta to Peshawar. Above all, armed with the experience of the British railway boom of the 1840s, he and his Government introduced the same system in India. He envisaged connections between the main internal centres and the ports. Before he left India, approximately 300 kilometres of railways were in successful operation. He also introduced the telegraph, and revised the postal systems. The Universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were founded. When, in 1856, his health began to break down, Dalhousie resigned. The last of the Governor-Generals, he was deeply affected by the news of the mutiny. Following the transfer of the Company, a Viceroy was appointed in the name of the Crown.

Although fewer professional artists worked in India as the nineteenth century progressed, there was still a demand for portraits. The majority of the later works was executed by professional portrait painters in England. The advent of photography was having its effect, not only on artists, but also on the print-makers who saw this more efficient means of recording people and places as a threat to the traditional techniques of print-making. By about the 1860s, the photographic processes were gaining popularity, and aquatint, etching, line-engraving, stipple, mezzotint and even lithography, as reproductive processes for pictures, belonged to the past.

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The book, *Studies in South Indian Jainism* with special reference to Andhra-Karnataka was first published in 1922. The writer has divided the material culture of Jainism into three chapters namely, (I) The Evidence of Tradition (II) Epigraphia Jainica and (III) Jainism in the Andhra-Karnataka literary tradition. The writer claims that the study of Andhra-Karnataka Jainism will help to fill the gap in the history of that region from the fall of the Satavahana empire to the rise of the Chalukyas. He further adds that Jainism in Andhra *desa* was probably pre-Mauryan and asserts that the Bhadrabahu tradition was the starting point of the revival of South Indian Jainism. Basing his views on the literary sources he further argues that the Nandas of Magadha were Jaina followers, and even goes to the extent of tracing the ahimsa doctrine of the Jains in the work of Kautilya's *Arthasastra.* The writer has meticulously utilized the manuscripts collected by Colonel Mackenzie and C. P. Brown. He has analysed the basic principles between the Jaina and Vedic cultures. It is quite interesting to note that the Jaina *munis* wherever they settled down, were responsible for clearing the jungles, tilling the soil and the establishment of the *pallis* and *vasati* respectively—the social and administrative organization and the city or township formation. Before the advent of the Chalukyas, the Jaina kings of Andhra were tolerant towards other religions; it was during the rule of the Chalukya king Rajaraja Narendra that there was a vigorous campaign against Jainism and in favour of Hinduism, and this indirectly marks the decline of Jainism in Andhra *desa* by the middle of the eleventh century. He also infers that Amaresvara of Dhanyakataka may have originally belonged to a Buddhist or Jaina temple during the Satavahana period, and was later converted into one for Saivite worship under the rule of the Kotas. Based on records, he puts forth clearly that the intolerant persecution of the Jains was carried out during the time of the Kakatiyas of Warangal. While the Jains were being persecuted in Andhra *desa,* they enjoyed a relatively more peaceful life in the Karnataka region, which led to the migration of the Jains from Andhra to Karnataka.

Chapter two mainly deals with the Jaina epigraphs from Andhra-Karnataka. He lists a good number of Jaina centres in the region. Jainism in Karnataka was on firmer grounds and even major Hindu dynasties were tolerant towards Jainism and the latter's grants were allowed to be recorded in non-Jaina temples. He has classified the Jain records into (1) Memorial (2) Architectural (3) Votive (4) Iconographic (5) Votive and commendatory and (6) Commendatory groups. From the analysis it can be gathered that the members of the Hindu revival dynasty that is the Vijayanagara kings, had contributed much to Jainism in that region. The classified list of *acharyas* of the Jaina faith shows that at that time the followers of the *Mula sangha* and *Desi gana* were more in number and that the *sangha* was a popular monastic order. He claims that the inscription of Kharavela of Kalinga, which was contiguous with the Andhra mandala, was Jaina in order. The writer furnishes evidence to show that the Kadambas of Palasika (modern Halsi) were originally patrons of Jainism. He postulates a hypothesis of the migration of the Jaina Kadambas into South India along the east coast through Kosala and Kalinga. He goes to the extent of suggesting that the Kadamba place names were indicative of Jaina culture. Pujyapada, an early *acharya* of the fifth century AD spread the Jaina gospel throughout the Andhra-Karnataka mandalas.

Chapter three deals with the literary tradition, written both in Kannada and Sanskrit. No doubt, the contribution towards the growth of literature by Jaina *acharyas* was immense and they had a vast hoard of literature of Jaina *Agamas, Puranas,* philosophy, *Kavya,* grammar, logic, ethics and politics, geography, arithmetic and music. In fact, these works only brought them closer to the public of those days and saved the religion from going into oblivion. Interestingly, the writer points out that no literary work earlier than the eighth century in Kannada and the eleventh century in Telugu has been discovered. He also points out that the Karnataka literary styles had an influence in Kalinga also. The literary works of the Jains had even commanded the respect of the Muhammadan rulers like Allaudin and Aurangzeb.

Though the book was first published in 1922, the writer has utilized well the epigraphical as well as literary materials made available to him and has critically and neatly presented the book in an ordered sequence. The writer has provided us with useful and readable material and has also added an index.

—L. K. Srinivasan

Title : **The Language of Symbols**
Writer : Documentation and text by Smt. Archana. Edited by Gita Narayanan
Publisher : Crafts Council of India, Madras
Format : Pages 90, with 284 illustrations
Price : Rs. 65.00

Ritualistic drawings and floor decorations are not an unexplored art-form. Over the last four decades, a number of scholars have drawn our attention to the diverse specimens of *alpana* from Bengal, *rangoli* from Gujarat and Maharashtra, *kolam* from South India, *chowk-purna* from Uttar Pradesh and the *mandanas* from Rajasthan. Till now, no effort was made to interpret the deeper meaning inherent in these symbols. This lacunae has been filled by Smt. Archana, the writer, of the monograph under review.

The research into the vocabulary of these motifs was sponsored by the Crafts Council of India. The writer has confined her study to South India only, that is, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, Kerala and Karnataka. These provinces offer a rich and varied repertoire of traditional designs and symbols that are deeply rooted in the social milieu. It is interesting to note that symbols vary not only from province to province but also from community to community, and this is precisely what contributes to their richness and variety. The study gives the impression of a vast panorama of ritualistic expression. The writer delves into the context and language of symbols and attempts to analyse the vocabulary of symbols. The form and content of rituals, the vast and significant concepts at the root of all rituals and symbols as practised in the rural areas of South India also form a part of her analysis.

Smt. Archana traces the origins of the symbols to the early stages of evolution, to the cyclic process of cosmic phenomena which was translated, related to and even transposed with the more intimate and immediate levels of day to day living. The associated images, concepts, ideas, objects of reverence or fear find expression in these symbols which may be audio or visual, literal or abstract, mental or physical and they act as a potent stimulus that elicits an innate response from a specific group. The association and origin of symbols have been traced to the primary and earliest preoccupations of mankind such as fertility, death and rebirth; these are intimately related to the role of the woman who continues her participation at various levels. An attempt has been made to trace the origin of *kolam,* widely practised in the central regions of South India to the two most potent symbols, those of fertility and regeneration—the dot and the snake. Beliefs, charms and superstitions are associated with every aspect of life and these gave rise to symbols that are painted for self-protection. Some symbols reproduced in this book seem to have influenced textile designs, especially those used in the embroidery and appliqué fabrics of Karnataka.

This is an authoritative survey of the significance of the symbols used by the painters of traditional ritual decorations on their thresholds. The writer's genuine sense of perception of these symbols makes it a worthwhile study. The text is competently written. The illustrations are interesting; the photographs are clear but could have been reproduced better.

—Subhashini Aryan

Title : **Festivals and Holidays of India**
Writer : P. Thomas
Publisher : D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co. Pvt. Ltd.
Format : Pages 115, with 25 illustrations
Price : Not mentioned

To the observer of life on the Indian subcontinent, it must seem chaotic, to say the least, as there is hardly a time when one or other community's New Year is not being celebrated along with the anniversaries of a host of saints, heroes and martyrs and not to mention the rituals performed for several pantheons. However, for most people here that sense of confusion is never likely to arise as only those festivals and holy days that are particular to their own community's religious tradition will be celebrated meaningfully, the rest is external to their lives and may well be enjoyed in passing but does not provide the same sense of meaning and renewal.

This book is written with much enthusiasm by a keen observer of this subject. In the Preface, Mr. Thomas describes how he considers in detail all the important festivals and holidays of India, both religious and secular along with the different pilgrimage traditions and backgrounds of the different communities, including the tribals. In conclusion he states, "Thus the book gives a complete picture of the complex culture and demography of the sub-continent."

The first chapter deals with the principal Hindu holidays and begins with a brief introduction to Hinduism and the Hindu pantheon and then outlines the origins of and the way in which the principal festivals are celebrated. Unfortunately, they are not presented in a calendric sequence in order to emphasize their relationship to the seasons of the year.

Chapter two covers the regional and sectional Hindu festivals, temple feasts and fairs. In various regions of the subcontinent independent festival traditions have developed through time, the most important of which are dealt with here. While the writer does mention the seasons and climate in passing, it is necessary to emphasize that they are, along with the landscape, perhaps the most significant cultural determinants and surely go a long way towards explaining the much talked about 'unity in diversity' of life in India.

The question of the origins and meaning of the festivals and sacred events that take place throughout the land has been dealt with by the writer who takes the trouble to narrate the relevant mythology and *mahatmya* as well as refers to the pre-Puranic origins of many festivals and rituals which are still celebrated but now under a Puranic guise. The question of meaning is however very complex and there can be so many different answers depending on who tells the story.

The writer recognizes the importance of pilgrimage in the Hindu tradition and chapter three is devoted to a useful account of the *saptapuras* and other principal places of pilgrimage. In chapter four, the more important tribal communities and their festivals are outlined with the overlapping of Hindu and tribal beliefs and customs being emphasized.

In chapters five and six, Muslim festivals and sacred shrines are presented, this chapter begins with an historic account of the coming of Islam to India and mention is made of the remarkable

difference between the coming of Islam to the south with the early traders and the later invasion of the north by the warring Muslims. It is interesting also to read of the extent of the tradition of pilgrimage within the Muslim community.

The subsequent chapters cover the main sacred places and events of the Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and the Jewish communities throughout the land. After mentioning the national festivals of modern India, in the final chapter the writer discusses the different calendars and eras that are currently in use. This information will help the reader understand the relationship of festivals with respect to their eras. Unfortunately the subdivisions of the various years by lunar or solar reckoning have not been described or compared.

In conclusion, it must be said that Mr. Thomas provides the reader with a lot of information regarding the festivals and sacred traditions of India and as this field is attracting more and more interest no doubt this book will be referred to by many. However, it is unfortunate that he has not given the reader the benefit of the many works being published on the subject by a number of specialist observers, ranging from sociologists and historians, to economists. This could have been provided in the form of references and, most usefully, a bibliography.

—Arthur Duff

FIGURE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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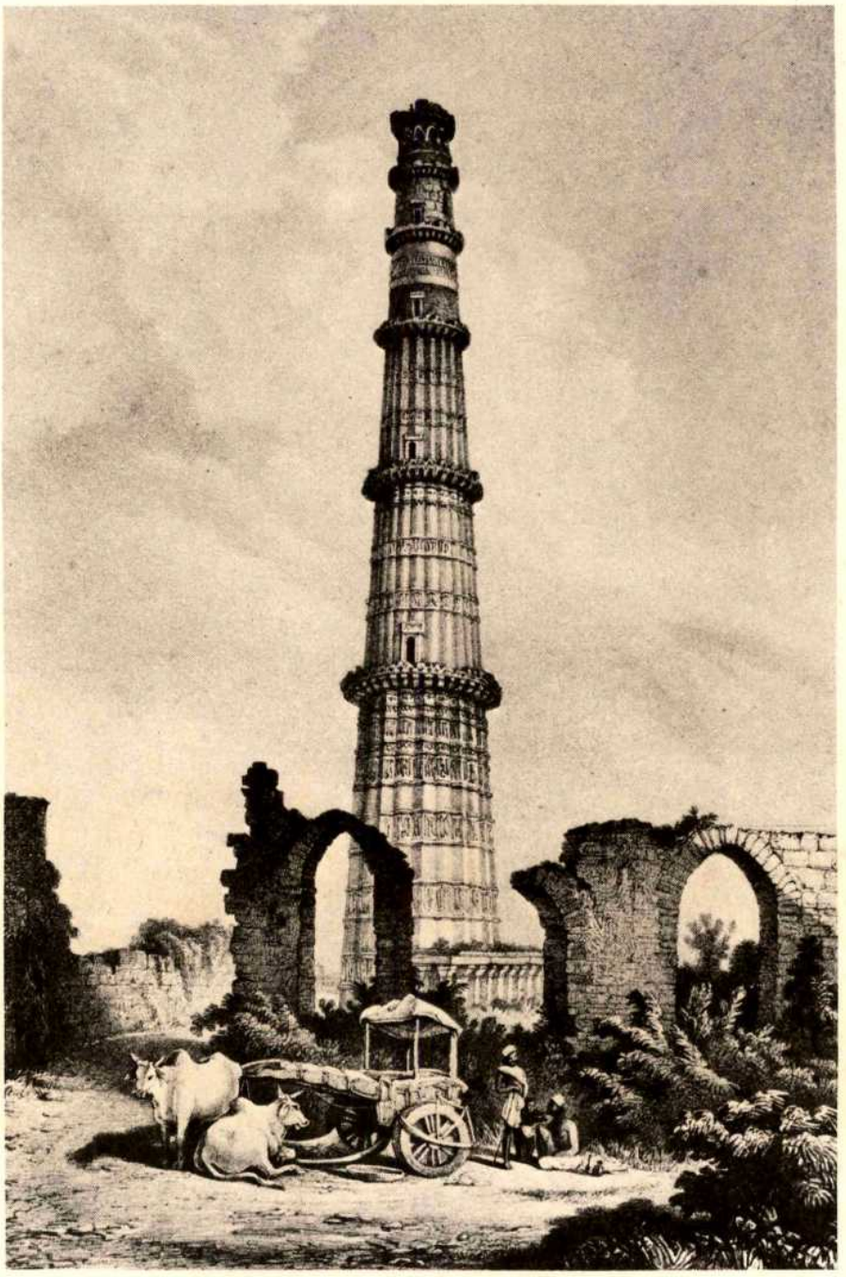

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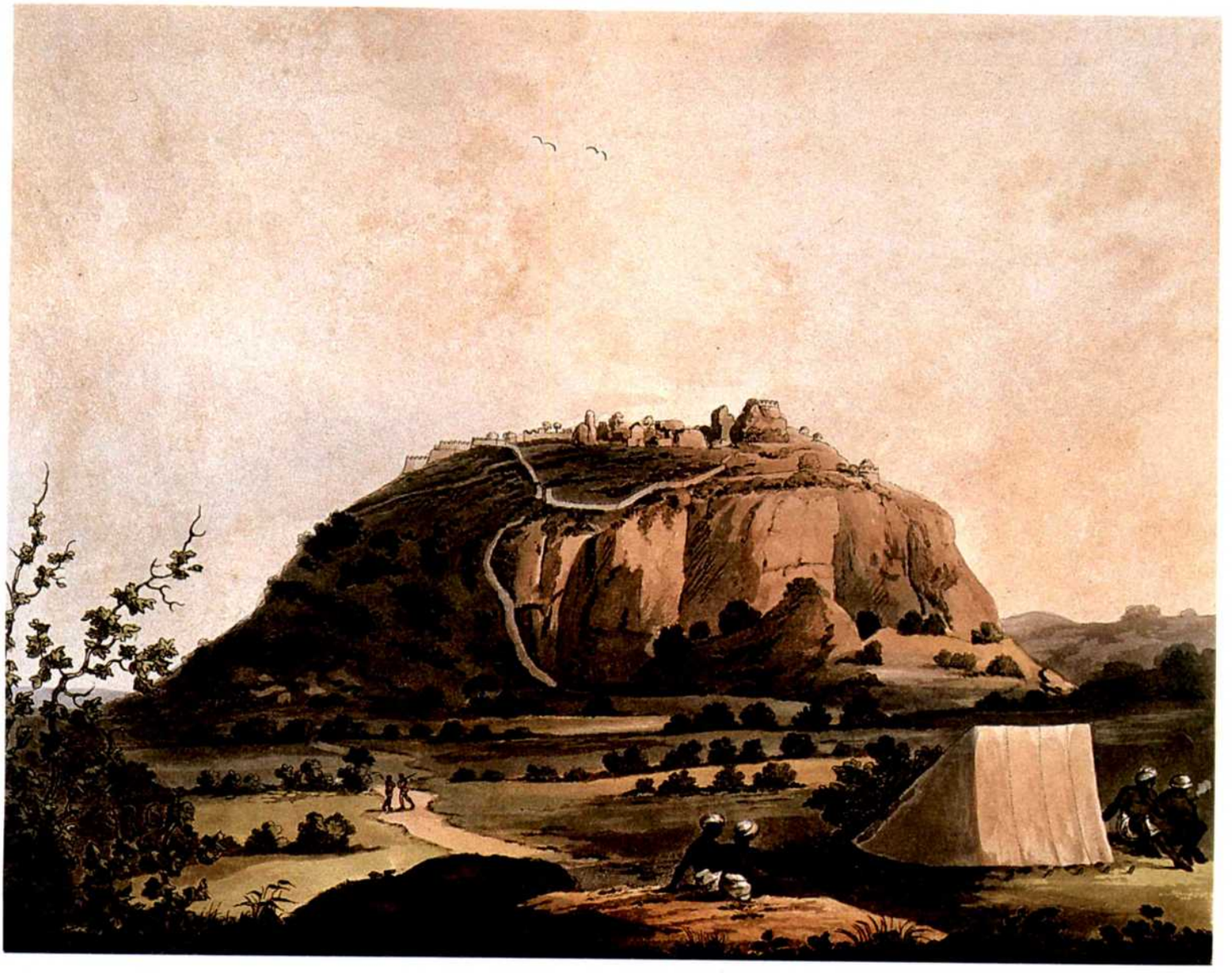

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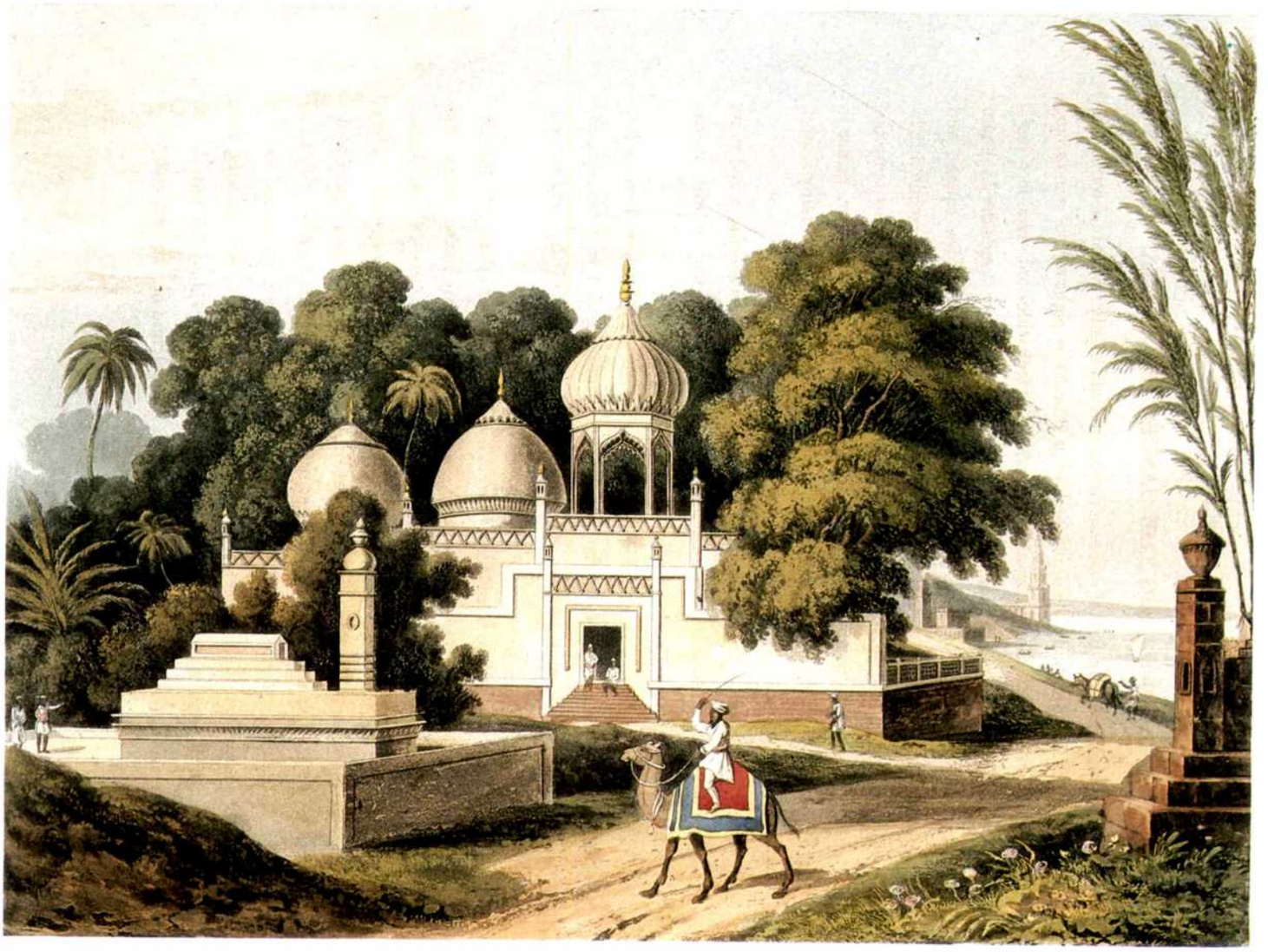

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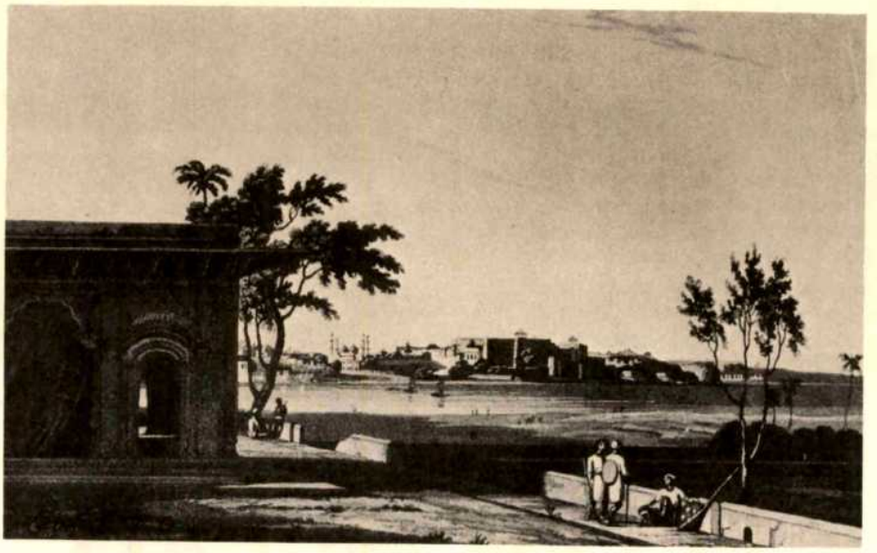

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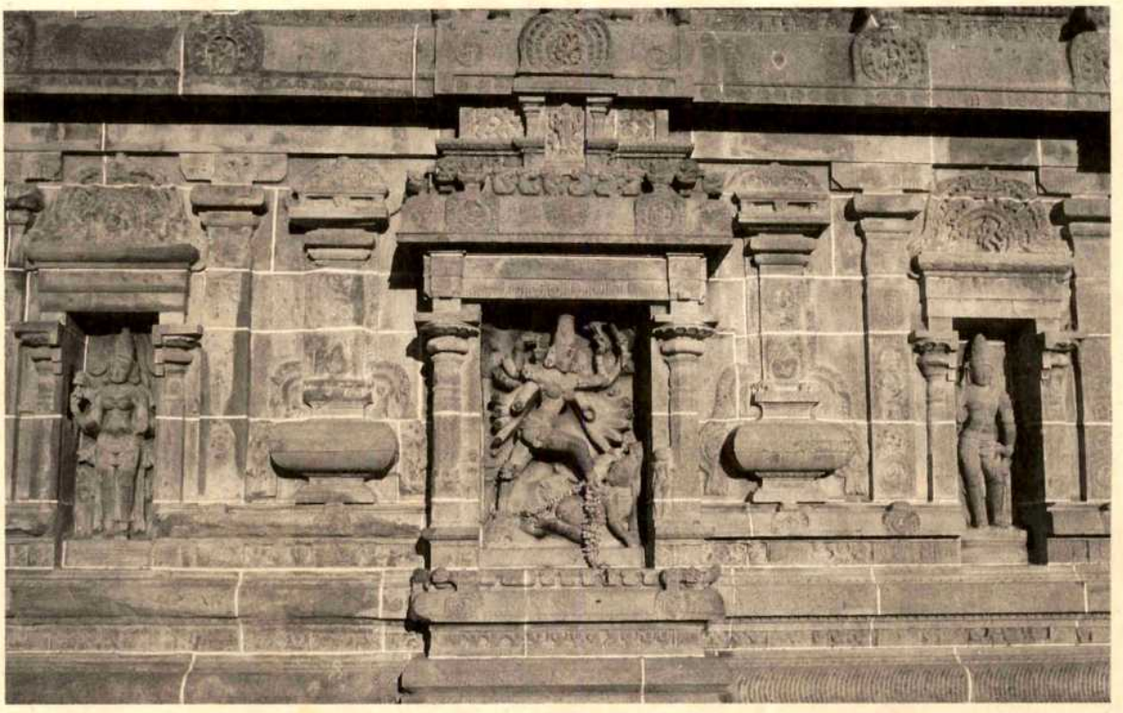

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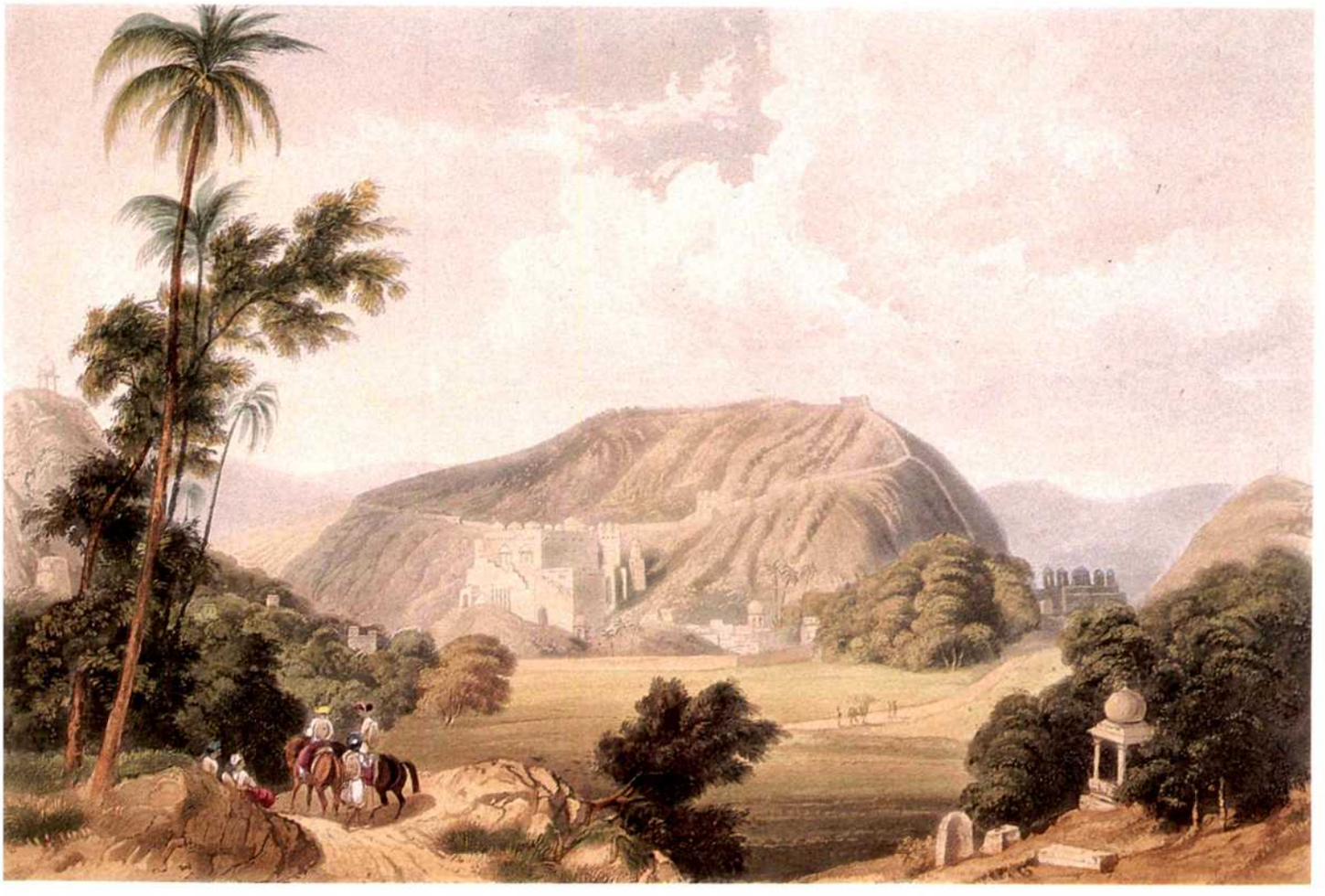

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Cover: Krishna and Radha in *Nitya-rasa*. Artistes: Ragini Devi as Krishna and Anjali Devi as Radha. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

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I would particularly like to acknowledge the efforts of Sivagami Subbiah and all the others who captioned all the illustrative material and offered their assistance with the seemingly endless sessions of proofreading and editing. Without Mr. M. P. Balakrishnan's many hours of typing, this volume would have taken much longer to complete. I am indebted to them.

Saryu Doshi

Editorial

Dressed in white, the dancer enacts the concept of primitive cosmology. During the finale of the performance she glides, in slow repetitive movements, along an abstract design symbolizing the entwined serpent, her soft curvilinear movements merging and dissolving into one another.

The drummer is also the dancer as he leaps and swirls, his whole being pulsating with the rhythm his fingers beat on the drum. Innumerable choreographic patterns are created as the dancer swings the drum from the front to the side diagonally, sometimes upwards high above his head and sometimes down to the ground.

As dancers move around Radha and Krishna, there is a heightening of the schematic grandeur, an intensification of collective devotional fervour that lifts the participants and the audience into an exalted state of consciousness.

These are glimpses of Manipuri *nartana,* a form of classical dance that has evolved in the verdant valley of Manipur set amidst the rugged ridges and craggy hills of north-eastern India.

Very little is known about ancient Manipur; there is no coherent account of its heroic kings or of the vicissitudes of history that shaped the destiny of this region and its people. The scattered and fragmentary records available indicate that the inhabitants of the valley belonged to seven different clans that eventually coalesced into what is still known as the Meitei community. It exhibits many ethnic and linguistic affinities to the Tibeto-Burmese group of peoples.

The ancient religion of the Meiteis seems to have combined a belief in animism with a creed of antediluvian gods, deified heroes and ancestors. Devotion to Meitei deities consisted primarily of ritualistic dances which cannot be interpreted as trance dances or magical rites but as a concrete expression of religious ardour and dedication. The entire community was involved in these ritual celebrations and the performances were suffused with spiritual fervour.

Gradually Hindu philosophic beliefs filtered into this secluded valley, and the Meitei people accepted and assimilated the new divinities into their religious pantheon. In the eighteenth century, during the reign of King Garibnivas, Vaishnavism became the accepted religion of the Manipuris. With the introduction of this faith new temples were built and *mandapas* (pavilions) erected for devotional music and dancing. Although the Meiteis readily adopted the Vaishnavite faith, the earlier gods and their worship were never completely abandoned. The synthesis of diverse philosophical and cultural elements in the valley of Manipur inspired a number of creative dance forms—folk, festival and classical.

The task of documenting the entire range of dance forms which has surfaced in Manipur unfortunately falls beyond the scope of this volume. We have elected to focus on the Vaishnavite classical dances of the region: the *Sankirtan* and the *Rasa-lila.* We introduce the subject with the *Lai-haraoba*—the Meitei core from which the Vaishnava

dances have emanated and evolved. We then describe the *Sankirtan* and the *Rasa-lila* dance forms. Further on in the volume the articles delineate the technique as well as the gestures and expressions of these two dances.

The Vaishnavite dances performed in the Manipur valley reflect the fusion of the Meitei and Hindu religious ideologies. The superimposition of the *bhakti* cult on the ancient Meitei practices resulted in a distinctive expression of Vaishnavite dance. Certain elements such as community prayer and the *maibi* (high priestess) dance from the *Lai-haraoba*—the most ancient identifiable and codified form of Meitei ritual dance—were adapted to Vaishnavite worship. Thus began the independent evolution of the Manipuri *Sankirtan* and *Rasa-lila*. Yet, while it is true that the Bhakti cult inspired the conception, content and narrative richness of the Vaishnavite tradition of dance, it is equally evident that without the inseminating authority of the indigenous influences the Vaishnavite tradition of Manipur would have been devoid of the characteristics that distinguish it from Vaishnavite dances in other parts of the country.

The Manipuri classical dances are sheer visual poetry: the gliding and spinning movements are enhanced by dainty and elegant steps. The figures sway to music and the arms move in slow circles and arcs. Each move of the dancer flows into the next without

1. *Lai-haraoba. A maibi* performance of a movement showing the weaving of cloth. Artiste: Rajani Maibi. Photo: courtesy, the Jhaveri Sisters.

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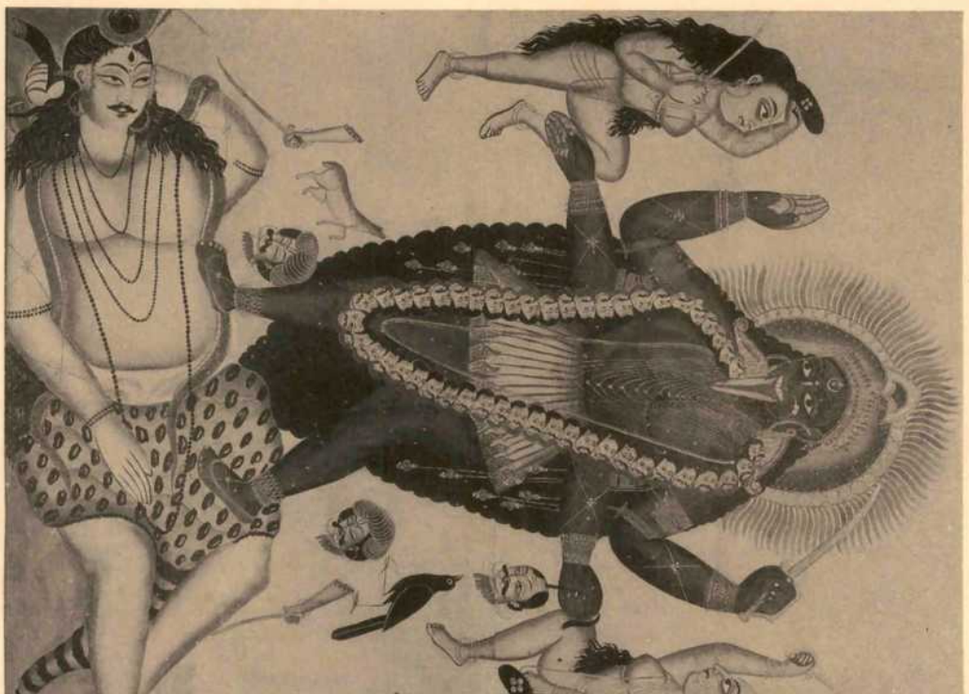

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noticeable transitions—the body merely curves and recurves into different poses and stances. The gentle undulating movements are accompanied with serene facial expressions. Even when a performer executes difficult high jumps or different moves in quick succession, the postures retain a supple and fluid quality. The technique of executing continuous flowing movement presents a definite contrast with the taut postures and sharp thrusts encountered in the dances from South India. Again, the facial movements in these dances are only suggestive in nature. In general, Manipuri dance aims at controlled but fluid motion as opposed to terse angularities and exaggerated gestures.

The free and spontaneous movements of the dancers offer no apparent indication of the complexities and intricacies that distinguish the dance system. The seemingly easy rendering and group character of the dances appear to approximate a folk idiom—an impression that is reinforced by the fact that almost all Manipuris can dance and do sometimes participate in the performances. But this somewhat superficial assessment of the dance style takes no cognizance of the classical thematic content, or its technical execution which adheres strictly to hallowed oral and textual traditions. Interestingly, this style of dance reveals a highly evolved form in the distinction it makes between the *tandava* (virile and agile) and *lasya* (soft and lyrical) aspects of dance—a feature not found in other Indian dances until recently.

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2. *Sankirtan.* A dancer with a drum in a swift spiral movement. Artiste: Kumar Singh. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

3. *Rasa-lila.* A *Maha-rasa* performance in a village temple. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

The Manipur tradition of Vaishnavite dances has its basis in numerous treatises on the subject. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries however, the study of these textual sources was neglected because of a general apathy towards indigenous forms of dance. Among the gurus who addressed themselves to effecting a resurgence in Manipuri dance, the efforts of Guru Amubi Singh had impressive and far-reaching consequences. Emphasizing the beauty of the *lasya* element in Manipuri dance, he created a definitive *gharana* (school) noted for its languid and lyrical grace. His association with Uday Shankar and his exposure to other forms of dance proved stimulating, and inspired him to develop techniques and themes suitable for the stage. His contribution played a significant role in transporting Manipuri dance from the sacred precincts of the temple to the proscenium of the auditorium. His compositions utilizing hand gestures and body movements to convey emotive content are memorable. He has left a rich lexicon of Manipuri dance vocabulary which is now being reiterated by his students through various institutions including the Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy.

Guru Bipin Singh has devoted himself to scholarship and research. Ensuring the survival of the original dance forms necessitated extensive documentation. Towards that end, he studied and recorded the oral traditions of different gurus, each of whom had specialized in a particular aspect. He then collated the oral traditions with the authoritative Vaishnava texts and manuscripts. During the course of his work he was able to determine the scientific tenets that had served as the foundation of classical Manipuri dance. On the basis of this information he recreated and re-choreographed dance compositions within the traditional framework. His emphasis on technical elements was combined with rich compositional treatment in a manner that brought out the intrinsic beauty of each movement. He designed his compositions with the demands of the stage in mind and his presentations are particularly notable for highlighting the difference between the *lasya* and *tandava* aspects of the dance form. Today, his style is recognized as a distinct *gharana.* In all his work, Guru Bipin Singh has received enthusiastic collaboration from the Jhaveri Sisters and Kalavati Devi.

The stage presentations of Manipuri dances in various parts of the country have acquainted the general public with the intriguing beauty of the expressions that have evolved in the remote valley of Manipur. Although these stage presentations are superb, they remain at the level of artistic exposition; they can never evoke, fully, the spirit in which the dances are performed in their own environment. For in Manipur, the *Sankirtan* and the *Rasa-lila* are not enacted for entertainment or for the edification of the people; they are presented as a sacred offering to the gods. They stem from a highly ritualistic tradition and embody in their theme and style the sensuality and spirituality of the Bhakti cult. Members of the community participate in these dances and the atmosphere is charged with religious ecstasy: the dances express the shared spiritual yearning of the people. The Manipuris believe that they are the descendants of the *gandharvas* (celestial musicians) and thus dance and music are inextricably interwoven in their lives. Their innate sense of rhythm, their poise and dignity, and their piety have crystallized into an aesthetic sensibility that permeates every aspect of their ethos.

—Saryu Doshi

Introduction

Kapila Vatsyayan

Manipuri may be described as a dance form which is at once the oldest and the youngest among the classical Indian dances. In its present form, it is comparatively unfettered, being bound only in a limited manner to the literary word and the rigidity of the *tala* (time measure). It is seemingly free and spontaneous, apparently easy and flowing. Looked at closely, this dance style is the manifestation of a deeply ritualistic tradition, combined with a vitality with which an art-form throbs only when it is shared by the community at large.

There is no coherent history of the earliest inhabitants of Manipur, a jewel of natural beauty lying amidst the hills on the north-eastern border of India. However, there is enough evidence to prove that a rich culture flourished here even during the pre-Aryan days. The small valley and the adjoining hills sheltered several ethnological types; many tribes generically known as the Nagas inhabit the area to this day. Without going into the ethnological complexities of the region, one might classify, for purposes of discussion, the inhabitants of the region into valley dwellers and hill-people. Manipur belongs largely to the valley people who call themselves Meiteis and trace their origin to the Vedic times. Whatever the heritage, it is fairly well established that many ritual practices were prevalent very early in the region. The continuity of such ritual practices is sustained by the dances. The ritual dances are not merely trance dances or dances for exorcising evil spirits, but are of sheer devotion and dedication to their gods.

The Meiteis as a community were well-versed in innumerable ritual dances, and the most exquisite examples are the rituals of the *maibas* (high priests) and the dance of the *maibis* (high priestesses). These high priests and priestesses are the heralds of good. Clad in spotless white, they invoke the deity through repetitive but disciplined movements. Apart from this, there are the dances by couples in which the theme is a local legend of two types, that of Nongpok-Ningthou and Panthoibi and that of Khamba and Thoibi. Rather than performing before an image of a god, they dance to an abstract design which symbolizes the entwined serpent. Undoubtedly the purpose of worship is to invoke a deity who is 'formless' and not identifiable with any known Hindu god. The abstract design is executed through concentrated movements, repetitive in character and highly symbolic in presentation.

Not until the eighteenth century did Vaishnavism become the State religion of this secluded valley, although some form of Hinduism may have reached there earlier. This, of course, is conjectural but seems valid because some of the Meitei dances can be identified as based on the earlier Shaivite tradition.

Since the religious impact of Hinduism or, more specifically, Vaishnavism was acknowledged only about two hundred years ago, Manipuri has been sometimes called the youngest amongst the classical dance styles of India. However, the evolution of its distinct form was the result of an interaction between the earlier ritualistic dances and the Vaishnava Bhakti cult. Thus, while today Manipuri dancing is the richest manifestation of the Vaishnavite tradition, the distinctive form of Vaishnavism practised here is certainly a result of the superimposition of the Bhakti cult on the area's earlier ritualistic practices.

Legend has it that in the eighteenth century, a king of Manipur named Garibnivas

formally embraced Vaishnavism. It is known that Shantidas of Bengal had visited Manipur and that King Khagemba had built a small temple dedicated to Vishnu. Thus, when Garibnivas officially declared Vaishnavism the State religion, the ground seems to have been prepared by preceding Vaishnava missionaries. Shantidas, however, left the deepest impression on the people. The Vaishnavism of the Chaitanya School attracted the inhabitants.

At this time, the people held ritualistic practices at their shrines. With the advent of Vaishnavism appeared new structures called *mandapas* (pavilions), where the Vaishnava devotional singing (*kirtan*) replaced these earlier ritual practices. The Meitei community-singing and *maibi* dance gradually took the form of the *kirtans* and the *choloms* (drum and cymbal dances) of the Vaishnavite tradition. The various sects of Vaishnavism such as Vishnuswami, Madhavacharya and Ramanandi exercised a strong influence on the people. All future development of the State religion of Vaishnavism and, consequently, of its dances, was a result of these impulses.

Nowhere else in India are the *rasas* (dance-dramas) described in the *Srimad Bhagavata* so alive as in Manipur. Bit by bit, chapter by chapter, the scenes of the *Bhagavata* are recreated. In these *rasa* dances, a myriad moods and facets of the Krishna legend are presented in a fascinating manner.

It must be remembered that although the Meiteis assimilated the Vaishnava tradition, the older forms and themes were never given up. The result is a rich repertoire, divided into two clear parts. The first consists of the Meitei dances, such as the *Lai-haraoba* and the *Khamba Thoibi*, while the second includes the Vaishnavite dances which chiefly present the varieties of *rasa* dances and the *bhangi-parengs* (series of body flexions).

From the eighteenth century onwards, the history of the dance style can be traced fairly accurately. The present form and repertoire of the dance is attributed to another king who saw it all in a dream. It is said that King Bhagyachandra (eighteenth century) saw in a religious trance Lord Krishna and the *gopis* (milkmaids) performing the divine dance. Both the *rasa* dances and the present costumes of Manipuri are attributed to the king's dream.

But for recent discoveries of manuscripts in the Manipuri language, the tale about the dream of the king could have been dismissed merely as a legend. The manuscripts are convincing evidence of the incomparable contribution of this king to the modern Manipuri dance. The maharaja wrote a manual on dance called the *Govinda-sangita-lila-vilasa.* Of course, there is some controversy about the authenticity of this text in the

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1. *Sankirtan.* A group of *pung* (drum) and *kartal* (cymbal) dancers. Artistes: members of Tauryatrik Kala Vikas Sangh. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

Manipuri language but the controversy does not invalidate its importance. The treatise, roughly of the period AD 1774 to 1784, lays down clearly the scope of this dance style. From this work, we gather that there were also two earlier works, the *Nartan Vartika* of Chitrarath Gandharva and the *Raasaprakasa* of Gargacharya, but both the works have been lost.

The *Govinda-sangita-lila-vilasa* generally follows the *Natyashastra* tradition, but makes significant departures. In this work, the writer defines *tandava* (masculine) and *lasya* (feminine), which are not found in the treatises of the medieval period from other parts of India. *Tandava* is divided into the *chalanam,* the *gunthanam* and the *prasaranam. Lasya* is also divided into *simitangam* and *sphuritangam.* This classification is distinctive to this work and is followed to this day in contemporary practice. His classification of *natya* also differs from the classification known to the other treatises which have only divided the generic term into *nritta* (pure dance), *nritya* (interpretative dance) and *natya* (theme portrayed by histrionic representations). The writer divides it into *rasaka* (dance-drama) and *rupaka* (pure drama). Although *rasa* is mentioned in the *Natya-shastra,* it is not elaborately described by Bharata. The writer devotes a full chapter to *rasaka* and speaks in detail of the various types of *rasa* dances—the *Maha-rasa, Maju-rasa, Nitya-rasa, Nirvesha-rasa* or the *Kunja-rasa.* He also speaks about the *Gopa-rasa* and quotes not Bharata as his authority but Gargacharya.

Judging from this description, it would appear that in Manipuri, not only the purely *shastric* tradition of the *Natyashastra* but also the Puranic tradition of the *Srimad Bhagavata* have been blended. An authoritative sanction is thus given to the dance. In his discussion of the various *angas* (main limbs) and *upangas* (minor limbs), we find a detailed account of the knee positions and *hastas* (hand gestures). Significantly, however, we do not find a minute discussion of the various facial movements, which were dealt with at length in the treatises of the South, especially those in Telugu and Malayalam.

A comparison of the textual descriptions with contemporary practices reveals that, by and large, Manipuri receives its theoretical sanction from this text. The *chalis* (traditional and basic compositions) and the *bhangi-parengs* known to the dance style, the *gati-bhangas* (body movements) as also the various types of *chalans* (movements) and *sthanakas* (postures) can be directly traced to this text rather than to the texts available in other parts of India.

However, this is not the only manuscript which we find in Manipur. Somewhat later, another king wrote a treatise called the *Mridanga-sangraha.* This work is attributed to Chandrakirti Singh and contains extremely valuable details of playing the particular variety of drum called the *khol* in Manipuri. The other treatise, *Shrikrishna-rasa-sangita-sangraha,* by Bhakti Siddhanta, was perhaps written earlier than the *Mridanga-sangraha.* It contains many of the lyrics to which the *rasa* dances are performed today.

The Technique

In technique, Manipuri is a far cry from anything we know in the other styles of dance. It has a flow and a grace which contrasts distinctly with the precision and terse clarity of the South Indian styles. This impression of ease and fluidity, which however is not a negation of precision, results from an unusual treatment of the body. The vertical line of the body is never broken. There are no deflections or sharp shifts from particular horizontal positions of the body as in Odissi or in Bharata Natyam. In fact, the body merely curves itself into the figure of eight. The positions attained are thus relaxed and controlled rather than sculpturesque. An effort is made to connect two parts of the body through beautiful curves. There are no sudden transitions from one posture to another; one melts into the other. With the figure eight or *nagabandha mudra* (the entwined serpent) as a basic motif, it is no longer possible to have a spread-out, open position of the lower limbs so characteristic of the South Indian styles. The knees are kept close together, flexed

in front, in what may be identified as the *nata* position of the knees in the *Natyashastra* tradition. The body is held upright, but without any tension. The torso is not treated as a unit, but is divided into two distinct parts above the *katisutra* (waistline)—the chest and the waist. Neither unit is used singly because the bend of any one part by itself would mean creating an angle. Thus, the chest and the waist, although moving in opposition, are always connected. The effect is of the slow drawing of a curve in the shape of an "S", but it is never a simple bend. The neck and the head follow this principle but the head never moves horizontally as in Bharata Natyam or Kathak. Instead, it also executes a figure eight in space. The arms and hands follow the pattern of the lower limbs and the torso. They too are never tense nor are they ever in acute flexion. They are held, in a naturally relaxed manner, away from the body in a semi-circular curve. The wrists play an extremely important part in the movements of the hands and the fingers, because they give the movements of the fingers a unique fluidity. A basic movement is the gradual closing in and opening out of the fingers, while the wrist attempts to execute a lateral figure of eight. The face is placid and without any exaggerated facial expressions. This controlled, but not unduly severe or austere, expression is sustained throughout the performance.

What has been described here is however restricted to the movements of the feminine type and may be described, in the language of the *Govinda-sangita-lila-vilasa* as the *simitangam*. A deliberate attempt to limit space and restrict movement is made here. In the *sphuritangam*, although greater freedom is allowed, it is once again within the definite limits set by the dancer. In the *lasya* portions, even in the *sphuritangam*, the dancer does not and cannot lift her foot away from the ground above the level of the knee. The release from the ground is invariably characterized by a sweep off the ground, a gliding movement almost touching the floor rather than a movement where the foot is lifted high above the ground.

The situation changes considerably in the *tandava* portion known for its agility, verve and high leaps, whether executed by women in the role of the child Krishna or by men in the numerous male dances of the region. The basic position in *tandava* is no longer the closed feet with knees bent in front leaving no space between them. Now there is nearly a four *tala* distance between the two feet and the knees remain bent in front. Normally, this is the position of the *pung-cholom* dancers who usually maintain this position practically throughout the number. In the *tandava* portions, the torso is occasionally treated as a separate unit and side-bends are frequent.

There are many sitting positions and many spirals and turns known to the dance style, both in *lasya* and *tandava*. In *lasya*, the *sthanakas* or various positions once again attempt to limit space and although women dancers change the level throughout a performance, there is hardly ever much space between the two feet. In the *tandava* portions, the *sthanakas* take the form of positions known as the *vrischika karanas* of the *Natyashastra* tradition. Some of these are common to Odissi. There are few leg extensions in the *lasya* or the *tandava* portions. The *gunthanam* described in the *Govinda-sangita-lila-vilasa* in the context of *tandava* may be identified as the various sitting and jumping movements in *tandava* when there is comparatively little distance between the feet and the knees. However, neither in the *tandava* portions nor in the *lasya* portions are hip movements allowed. There is one type of thigh or pelvic movement known to the dance style. It is an up-and-down movement rather than a side-to-side movement, with the shift of weight from one foot to the other characteristic of styles like the Odissi. The up-and-down movement is achieved through knee dips and through a suggestion of a hop on the toe.

The manner of covering space in Manipuri is expressive of its grace and delicacy. The dancer covers floor space also in figures of eight and, when the foot is lifted to cover space, it invariably touches the ground by a slight toe movement rather than the flat foot or the heel. The various positions of the foot like the *kunchita* or the *agratalasanchara of* the *Natya-shastra* are seen repeatedly in this dance style. Often these movements are very complex.

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2. *Gopa-rasa.* Krishna and Balarama. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

3. *Lai-haraoba. Maibi*s (high priestesses) in a *Lai-haraoba* procession. Photo: courtesy, Manipuri Nartanalaya.

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The Movements

The dancer begins with the movement known as the *chali.* The *chali* need not be identified with the *chari* (leg movements) of the *Natyashastra,* but it is definitely a movement which suggests basic ways of walking and covering space. The dancer moves first to the front and back with hands held horizontally at the chest level and then moves these hands vertically in an up-and-down direction. She then covers space walking sideways, ending by weaving circles and spirals. In these basic movements, the various types of *bhramaris* (spins) are introduced, the two distinct varieties being the *uplei* (left spiral movements) and the *longlei* (right spiral movements). The *uplei* and the *longlei* have been identified by some scholars as the *bahya bhramari* and *antara bhramari* of the *Natyashastra.* We may understand these *leis* (turning movements), whether in *lasya* or in *tandava,* as ways of covering floor space; usually, it is a sideways movement followed by a semicircle. They are the finale of the dance cadences and are often executed in multiples of three as in the *tihai* of the other dance styles. Sometimes, a spiral movement in vertical space is executed, where the dancer treats her body like a screw and weaves a spiral vertically from a higher level to a lower level. While doing so, the dancer also takes a circle or a spin. This very difficult movement has a graceful fluidity, sometimes mistaken for imprecision. The *achongba* or jumping movements are characteristic of the *tandava* portions of the dance.

The basic movements of the *chali* are connected to form the various types of *parengs* (series of body movements). The *parengs* are perhaps parallel to the *tirmanams* of Bharata Natyam, for they are cadences in a given metrical cycle. The metrical cycles are very many and the in-beats and the cross-beats are complicated, requiring a high sense of precision. All the *leis* are used in *parengs* and different types of *talas* are employed, especially the *Rajamel* (seven beats), the *Rupaka* (six beats), the *Panchamsavari* (fifteen beats) and the *Tintal* (of seven and eight beats). Three *bhangi-parengs* are attributed to King Bhagyachandra and two to his descendant, King Chandrakirti. The first three *bhangi-parengs,* and the *bhangi-pareng-achouba,* the *Brindavan-bhangi-pareng,* and the *Khurumba-bhangi-pareng* are known as the *lasya* cadences. They are used in the *rasa* portions of the dance. The three other *bhangi-parengs* have a common adjective *goshtha* which stands for the *tandava bhangi-parengs.* They are used by actors while presenting the character of Krishna in the *rasa* dances. Three such *bhangi-parengs* are prescribed, namely, the *Goshtha-bhangi-pareng,* the *Goshtha-brindavan-bhangi-pareng,* and the *Goshtha-khurumba-bhangi-pareng.* The last one is rarely performed and seems to have gone out of vogue.

With such an elaborate system, it is not surprising that the dance has a highly complex technique of movement and *tala.* The dance is not restricted to solo numbers. Manipuri is perhaps the only classical style in which we find exquisite surviving compositions, such as the *hallisaka,* the *charchari* and other forms mentioned in classical Sanskrit literature. Group formations mentioned in the *Natyashastra* have been lost to other classical forms. One comes across some survivals in folk forms, but Manipuri exhibits, in a well-chiselled fashion, the many types of *pindibandhas* (formations) described in the *Natyashastra.* In the *rasa* dances, we find that all the four types of *pindis* mentioned by Bharata can be seen. We also see that other group formations mentioned in later texts find a place in the different numbers of the Manipuri dance.

The Repertoire

It is not easy to discuss the repertoire of Manipuri dance because it usually demands a definition of Manipuri as a classical style. Innumerable folk styles are prevalent and a

large variety of community dances are still practised, besides a sizeable number of ritualistic dances known to the region. It is, therefore, somewhat erroneous to limit a discussion of the repertoire merely to the *rasa* dances of Manipur.

First and foremost are the surviving ritual dances which have been absorbed into the repertoire. The *Lai-haraoba* and the *Khamba Thoibi* may be counted amongst these. Their historical and mythical theme makes them as classical as any of the later Vaishnavite dances. They have an element of *abhinaya* (histrionic representation) besides pure *nritta.* It is true that the relationship of the "word" and the "gesture" is neither so precise nor so formalistic as in the other classical dances. However, since the element exists and since there is a definite pattern of movement, it would not be wrong to include these numbers in a discussion of the classical repertoire.

There are then the various types of *cholom*s and the different varieties of the *kartali*s. The *cholom*s are both *lasya* and *tandava.* Those belonging to the feminine group are the *cholom*s of the small cymbals, namely, the *manjira cholom* and those of the *tandava* type are the *kartal cholom* with large cymbals. The dance of the *khol* which is performed by men, may be said to be the highest achievement. The dance may be executed by a solo performer or by a hundred men. The range of sound which can be produced through the *pung* (a type of drum) has to be experienced to be believed. Perhaps, among percussion instruments, there is no other which can command the same range of communicative sound as the *pung.* There are other *cholom* dances too, such as the *duff cholom.*

Amongst the *kartali* dances are the items with clapping, performed only by women, known as the *nupi khubak ishei* and the *nupa khubak ishei.* These are group dances in which a number of interesting group formations can be seen and the dance is built on the clapping of hands at cross rhythms to the basic rhythm played by the accompanying *pung.*

To the *cholom* and the *kartali* dances must be added another variety of *tandava* dancing in the region, the *Thang-Ta* or the sword and the spear dances. These are vaguely reminiscent of the *Kalaripayattu* of Kerala and are purely martial dances.

Strictly speaking, all these dances are on the margin of the classical and the folk. They are invariably performed in groups and are known to the community at large. Although a soloist or a group of people may attain a high degree of perfection, they are dependent for their success on group participation. The accompanying music is recurrent and the refrains are typical.

Rasa **Dances**

It is only when we come to the *rasa* dances that the richness of both the *nritta* and the *abhinaya* of the Manipuri style can be seen. Here we find that the art attains the same level of perfection and stylization as any of the other developed dance-drama forms of India. These are compositions of a high literary order set to classical music and performed to a given metrical cycle. Bhagyachandra Maharaja is said to be the composer of at least three of the four/five *rasa* dances known to Manipur. There is the *Vasanta-rasa* for the full moon day of *Chaitra*, and the *Kunja-rasa* which is performed on *Ashvin-Purnima.* The third is the *Maha-rasa* which is performed on *Kartik-Purnima* in October-November. King Chandrakirti added the *Nitya-rasa,* and possibly the *Gopa-rasa.* The *rasa* dances follow a very definite pattern which gives full scope for solo dancing, for *pas de deux* and for the *corps de ballet.*

The literature of these *rasa* dances is Vaishnavite, but at the same time it gives full scope to the dancers to present the various *nayika*s (heroines) of the Indian aesthetic tradition and the several *sthayibhava*s (dominant states) mentioned in the *Natyashastra.* In all these, through the various episodes of the *rasa,* a dominant sentiment which is usually *karuna* (pathos) is created. Through the presentation of the transitory states, a configuration is produced of a dominant state of being. If the concept of *rasotpatti* (evocation of sentiment) is to be experienced, one must go to Manipur and watch a full

presentation of the *Maha-rasa.* Through each sequence the dancers present innumerable *vyabhicharibhavas* (transitory states). The various cadences of the *bhangi-parengs* give the fullest scope to the dancer to present variations on a given metrical theme.

The *rasa* dances thus constitute the most significant portion of the Manipuri repertoire. Other compositions known to this dance style, are the songs of Jayadeva from the *Gita Govinda* or Vidyapati's *Padavali* or the works of other poets of the Bhakti School. Often, these lyrics are woven into the *rasa* dances. It is only a recent practice that in presenting short numbers, these *padas* (lyrics) are performed as *Gitabhinaya* separately. When the dancer performs the portions of *pareng,* she is known to do *nritta* on just the *bols* (mnemonics) called the *mukhaboli.* Some other musical compositions like the *tanum* and the *Gitabhava* have also been employed by dancers, but they do not constitute an essential part of the Manipuri repertoire.

The dance of Krishna and the cowherds forms yet another group, where instead of the Krishna-Radha theme, only an episode of the playful Krishna is presented. The two *Goshtha-bhangis* along with the numbers known as *Goshtha nartana* or the *Gopa-rasa* complete the repertoire of Manipuri dancing. Many episodes of the playful Krishna are presented; it may be the episode of killing the demon Bakasura or the story of the playful child stealing butter. *Vatsalya bhava* (maternal love) is predominant in these numbers and one finds that very often the same mood of sheer ecstasy is created through them as it is in some of the numbers of Bharata Natyam where this aspect of Krishna's life is presented. These episodes are enacted by the dancer impersonating Krishna rather than a narration by Jashoda of his pranks as in Bharata Natyam. The aim is the same, that is, to present the ambivalence of the human attitude to this child-god. Whatever the path, it really leads to the same goal because, ultimately, the dancer who enacts the role either of Krishna, or Jashoda, or the *gopis*, or any other character in these dances, represents humanity looking up, yearning for identity with the godhead.

The permeating mood which Manipuri dance evokes is that of devotion, deep yearning and *karuna.* It symbolizes the pangs of separation from the godhead, the reunion with divinity. In the final analysis, all humans are *gopis*, ever seeking, ever desiring, ever yearning for the god who gives the illusion of being personal to each human being and is yet above them all. The description in the *Srimad Bhagavata* of the *rasa* is not only enacted here but permeates the very spirit of the dance.

As a theatre spectacle, Manipuri has a delicate grace and beauty. It is full of the intricate complexities of sinuous movements. In theme and spirit, it is the embodiment of *bhakti* (devotion) at its purest.

◇

History
the celestial inheritage

E. Nilakanta Singh

Manipur spreads over an area of 21,985 square kilometres of which the hills surrounding the valley cover nearly 20,295 square kilometres. Its people, approximately fifteen hundred thousand, are of Indo-Mongoloid stock and are known as the Kiratas. Almost two-thirds of the population lives in the valley of Manipur. Originally, the people in the valley were members of seven different tribes, but in the course of the centuries, they have merged into the Meitei community. They speak the Kuki-Chin group of languages and are the inheritors of an old and unbelievably rich literary tradition. Their script, though allied to the ancient Indian Brahmi script, has an independent character. It is believed to have been introduced into Manipur *c.* AD 800. The Meiteis, it is said, are descendants of people from south-west China who migrated southwards, scattering themselves in South-east Asia and India. There are two other Indo-Mongoloid groups, the Nagas and the Kukis, that form part of the Manipuri population. The cultural heritage of the people of Manipur also betrays strange affinities to certain Mongoloid groups such as to the Tai Ahoms of Assam within India, and to the Tibetans, the Bhutanese, the Javanese, the Thais and the Balinese outside India.

The Indo-Mongoloid people have contributed significantly to Indian culture. As a society, the Kiratas have great optimism, cheerful disposition, self-reliance and courage. They exhibit an innate sense of colour and rhythm. This is reflected in their textiles and their crafts as well as in their dance, which has been refined to an art. Although their background, particularly that of the people of the valley, is primarily Indo-Mongoloid, it has absorbed some elements of Aryan and Dravidian cultures over the years.

Manipur constitutes a considerable portion of the Tantric belt which spreads from the west to the east along the northern regions of the subcontinent and includes Kashmir, Nepal, Bhutan, Kamrup and Bengal. Because cultural development is evolutionary in character and is essentially a continuous dialogue and a sharing of experience and values, it dies in isolation. Therefore, the understanding of Manipuri culture in its proper perspective entails a study of the gradual intermingling of the Tibeto-Burman speaking people with the brahmins from various parts who came into this valley during and after the fifteenth century. The people of the region were also significantly influenced by the Hindu ethos of Assam and Bengal.

The fifteenth century ushered in a new cultural phase. Manipur enthusiastically adopted the rites and rituals of Bengal Vaishnavism. By the eighteenth century, Manipur became a land of the Vaishnavas with a distinctive cultural expression which manifests itself in an annual cycle of social and religious festivals.

Manipuri culture has its own myths and legends embodying specific social memories. The naming of the area as Manipur, for instance, is associated positively with the legendary Chitrangada episode in which the great Pandava Arjuna is killed by his son Babruvahan and later re-infused with life. This event is mentioned in the *Bhavishya Purana,* a work of the thirteenth century, and might possibly refer to the Manipur *chakra*

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(wheel) of *kundalini yoga* in the Tantric philosophy. This theory is supported by the legend about a valley which was submerged in water and was made dry with the *trishul* (trident) of Lord Shiva. According to another myth, Shiva acted as a sentinel on the mountain top while Krishna secretly danced the *Rasa-lila* with the *gopis* (milkmaids). Modern researches concerning the identity of Shiva indicate that he was possibly a Mongoloid god of the Himalayas. His other name, Tantrachar, is another form of the name Chinachar, and possibly refers to the areas of Chin or Mahachin, attached to the Himalayas. The Tantric connection is reinforced by a popular Manipuri diagram—that of the snake biting its own tail. This motif represents the deity Pakhangba (moon-/snake-god).

Underlying the varied cultural strata of Manipur is the epic of Khamba and Thoibi, the ill-fated lovers, one a commoner and the other a princess, who were ultimately united only to die together later—a tragic end to their love. This immortal saga, believed to have occurred in the twelfth century in the kingdom of Moirang in Manipur, represents the aspirations and values of the entire people. In importance, it is placed directly after the Hindu epics of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata.* To this day, the minstrels sing stories from these epics for nights together. They are accompanied on the *pena,* a stringed instrument, perhaps a corruption of the vina.

There is another equally important facet of Manipur's culture which bears mention—the ethical code embodied in Manipuri wrestling, Manipuri foot-hockey, the game of polo which was introduced for the first time in India and the *Thang-Ta* (sword and spear dance)—a martial arts tradition which is currently receiving international recognition.

Manipur is thus a land of Tantra, mantra, *yantra,* of Khamba and Thoibi, of Krishna, Radha and the *gopis* from Brindavan. And Manipuri culture represents an interesting blend of aesthetic and ethical elements.

The ancient religion of the Manipuris is still obscure. Animism combined with ancestor

1. A *yumjao,* a typical village dwelling in Manipur. Photo: Angana Jhaveri.
2. The weaving of a *phanek* (sarong) on a waist-loom. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

3. Martial dances. Photos: Pankaj Shah.
a. A movement in the *Thangairol* (sword dance). Artiste: a student of Guru Gaurakishore Sharma.

3b

3c

3b. A movement in the *Khausarol* (spear dance). Artiste: a member of the Huyel Lallong Manipur Thang-Ta Association.
3c. A movement in the *Yetthang-oithang-yannaba* in which two experts fight with two swords each. Artistes: members of the Huyel Lallong Manipur Thang-Ta Association.

worship, possibly constituted the earliest form of Manipuri religious beliefs. This was followed by the Tantric cult which brought with it the concept of Shiva-Devi. Gradually, it was absorbed into the primitive religion, assuming a Manipuri nomenclature. According to the manuscripts of the various *Puranas* of Manipur in recorded history, the Manipuris worshipped a sun-god called Sanamahi. Later this deity was also identified with Vishnu and even today occupies the south-west corner of a Manipuri home. The moon-god, known as Pakhangba, later became identified with the snake-god – positively recognized as a Tantric symbol – and has been accepted as the deity of the royal families. Legend recounts that both the sun-god and the moon-god are the progeny of Guru Shidaba, the immortal guru, the Absolute, and of his consort, the mother-goddess Laimaren Shidabi who represents the conscious mind. There also exists an ancient prayer, with music and dance dedicated to the goddess Usha, known as *Chingkherol Shannaba* which manifests affinities to Vedic rites. There are thus three forms of religious traditions overlapping and intermingling with one another: the animistic foundation, the Tantric tradition of the medieval period and the Vaishnavite structure starting from the fifteenth century.

Among the dances of Manipur, the *Lai-haraoba* can be considered the most basic. It is obviously connected with the practices and traditions relating to the animistic pre-Hindu deities, and later appears to be influenced by Tantric worship. Dedicated primarily to the *Umang-lais* (village divinities) who have been accepted as ancestors of various Manipuri subclans called *yumnaks*, the *Lai-haraoba* is performed annually in every Manipuri village. The cult of the *Umang-lais* combines spirits, deities and ancestor worship and its gods and goddesses number more than five hundred. *Maibas* (high priests) and *maibis* (high priestesses) organize and direct the *Lai-haraoba* which is essentially a festival of the divinities. They are also the main protagonists of the dance. The *maibis*, beloved of Lord Shiva, start the dance with a *mudra* (hand gesture) that symbolizes Shiva. The rituals and movements, including the invocation to the spirit, without doubt evince a Tantric world. The story of Nongpok-Ningthou (the Manipuri counterpart of Shiva) and Panthoibi (the counterpart of Devi) is normally enacted by the *maibis*, whereas the duet of Khamba and Thoibi is often performed by young girls in appropriate costumes. To term the *Lai-haraoba* dance, particularly the stylized form of the *maibis* with *mudras*, as a folk idiom would be an understatement; to call it secular and mere village entertainment would be unjust. The philosophy of the *Lai-haraoba* now appears to have been fully translated into a ritualistic dance form.

During the reign of King Kiyamba (AD 1467), Bengal Vaishnavism seems to have assumed its initial expression in Manipur when in the fifteenth century a temple (still preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India) was dedicated to Vishnu, where *Sankirtan* singers possibly hailing from Bengal performed. In the reign of King Khagemba (AD 1630), references are found about a group of *kirtan* singers who called themselves *Bangdesh-pala* (*Ariba-pala*). King Charairongba (AD 1698) was initiated into the Nimandi cult, associated with Acharya Nimbarka, and Vaishnavism began to assume importance as the State religion. But during the reign of his son, King Garibnivas (AD 1709-1748), another cult, Ramanandi, led by the preacher Shantidas, came into being. Although the *Sankirtan* belongs to the *natya* tradition expounded by the Indian sage, Bharata *muni*, it has developed its own character.

It is with King Jai Singh, referred to popularly as Rajarshi Bhagyachandra (AD 1763-1798), that Bengal Gaudiya Vaishnavism, in all its manifestations, became closely associated with Manipur. He introduced the *Nata-sankirtan* (*Anouba-pala*), a new form of dance, along with the celebrated *Rasa-lila* which is rooted deeply in the *Bhagavata* tradition and modelled after the classical *ragas* (melodies of fixed notes) and *talas* (time measures). The local scholars and gurus contributed greatly to these dance forms. The king claimed to have conceived the *Rasa-lila* in a dream in which Krishna appeared before him and directed him to a jack tree out of which the images of Govinda and other

4. The Thangjing temple of Moirang. Dancers performing the *Lai-haraoba* in front of the temple of a particular *lainingthou* (god) and *lairembi* (goddess). Photo: courtesy, Manipuri Nartanalaya.

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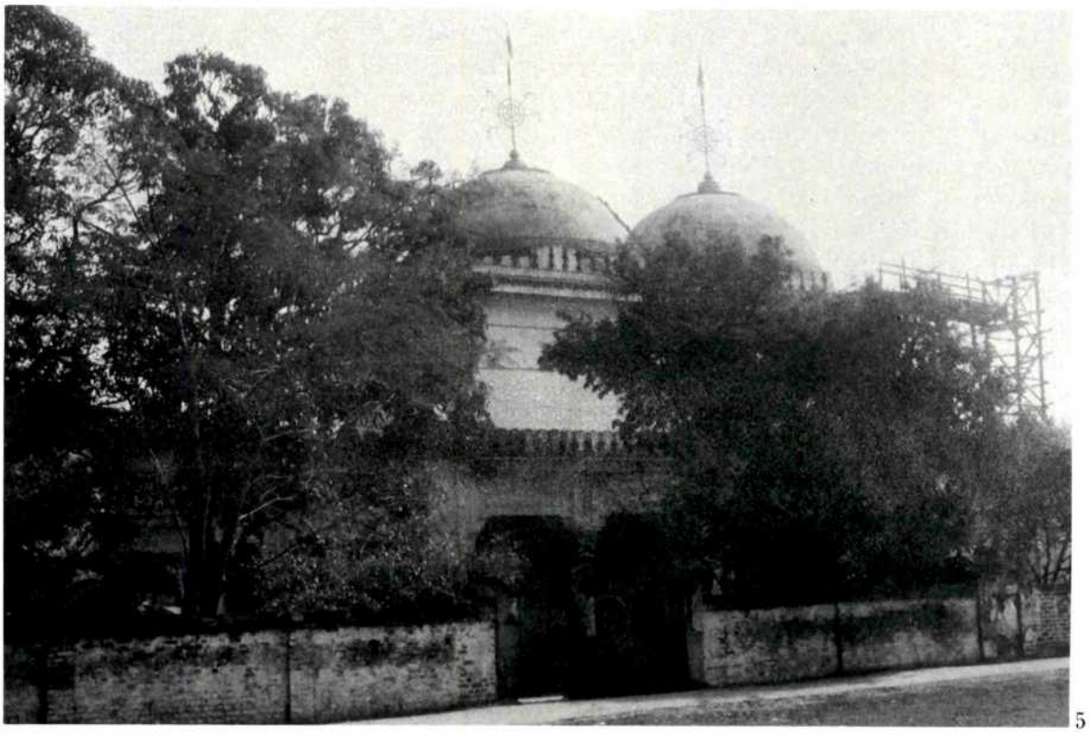

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5. The Shri Shri-Govindaji temple, attached to the royal palace at Imphal. Photo: courtesy, Manipuri Nartanalaya.

gods were to be carved. The image of Govinda was installed in a specially erected temple, called the Shri Shri-Govindaji, attached to the palace.

The *Nata-sankirtan* rose to great heights during the reign of King Chandrakirti Singh of Manipur (AD 1850-1886) when the sixty-four *rasas* (sentiments), variations of the *Shringararasa* (sentiment of love), were presented in thirty-two sessions. The movements grew out of the soil and were derived, to some extent, from the prevailing tradition of the martial arts. The presentation of the *padavalis* (devotional lyrics) in old Bengali—now increasingly changing into Manipuri—also had a regional touch about it. The classical *desi talas* (regional time measures) were adopted and adapted with great subtlety. The first part of any *Nata-sankirtan* performance, the *Raga Ahouba* (of the *pung-mridanga*—a percussion instrument), indicates with its successive rhythms, such as the *vyaghra* (fierce tiger), *vayu* (wind) and *jhara vristi* (thunder storm) *chhandas* (metrical arrangements), the gradual transformation of the singer's body through the yogic stages of *pravartaka, sadhaka* and *siddha.* Only when the body changes into *siddha doha* is the artiste considered to have attained the qualifications by which he is now ready to present the music. Every *Rasa-lila,* an extension of the *Nata-sankirtan,* performed at a *mandapa* (pavilion) must be preceded by a *Nata-sankirtan.* Because the *lila* (the interpretation of a theme through histrionic representation) is supposed to be the creation of Lord Chaitanya (known as *bhabi*—emotional experience), every *Nata-sankirtan* must begin with an invocation to Krishna-Chaitanya and end with a prayer to Nityananda (both of whom are considered to be one and the same person). In addition to the *Nata-sankirtan,* the *kirtan* (prayer) singing of Manipur includes the *Ariba-pala* (*Bangdesh-pala*), the oldest form of *kirtan* the *Manoharsai* from Bengal; and the *Dhop kirtan* of Chaitanya Sampradaya which King Chandrakirti brought to Manipur.

The *Rasa-lila* covers almost the entire gamut of Krishna's life, from his childhood pranks and exploits (*Gopa-rasa* and *Udukhal-rasa*) to his play with and apparent separation from the *gopis* (*Talarasaka* or *Khubak-ishei*) and the *Nupi-pala* associated with Jhulan Purnima, ending with his eternal dalliance with Radha and other *gopis* at Brindavan in various forms: the *Nitya-rasa* (performed any time of the year), the *Maha-rasa* (performed in autumn), the *Kunja-rasa* (performed in autumn) and the *Vasanta-rasa* (performed in spring). Rajarshi Bhagyachandra introduced the *Maha-rasa, Kunja-rasa* and *Vasanta-rasa* whereas later kings created other types of *Rasa-lilas* rooted in the *Bhagavata* tradition. The *Rasa-lila* also belongs to the *natya* tradition even though it does not conform to the description of *rupaka* (pure drama) delineated by Bharata *muni* in his treatise, the *Natyashastra.* To call it *uparupaka,* the short play dominated by dances, would not do justice to its rich content and long sequences. It belongs to the *rasaka* (dance-drama) category of the *uparupaka* type mentioned in Sharangdeva's work, the *Sangita-ratnakara,* and enriches the short *uparupaka* piece in the *natya* tradition.

To the Vaishnavas of Manipur, the *Sankirtan* (which includes the *Rasa-lila*) is really a *maha-yajna*—a great form of worship and prayer, associated closely with the life of the people. All the dances, festivals and *lila* are oriented towards *bhakti* (devotion). The life cycle of a Manipuri in its various stages of eight *sanskaras* (rituals) is marked by the performance of the *Sankirtan.* These *sanskaras* constitute the soul of Manipuri culture. The *Sankirtan* literary work, the *Narada-samhita,* sums up the spirit beautifully: "I do not dwell in heaven nor in the heart of the *yogis.* There only I abide, O Narada, where my lover sings."

When we come to the twentieth century, every Manipuri has to acknowledge with gratitude the role played by Gurudeva Rabindranath Tagore who gave a new status to Manipuri dance and introduced it to the outside world. He first saw the Manipuri *Rasa-lila* in 1919 in the Sylhet district (now in Bangladesh) and was fascinated with it. In 1926, Manipuri dance was introduced as a course at Shantiniketan where Guru Mahakumar and Guru Buddhimanta from Tripura were both invited to teach the dance form to students. Tagore composed a dance-drama with *lasya* (feminine) movements based on Manipuri

6. The Vishnupur temple, an early example of Vaishnavite architecture constructed and dedicated by King Kiyamba in AD 1467. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

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7. Gurus:
a. Amubi Singh. Photo: courtesy, Jagoi Marup.
b. Amudon Sharma. Photo: courtesy, Surachand Sharma.
c. Atomba Singh. Photo: courtesy, Manipuri Nartanalaya.
d. Bipin Singh. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

dance and a highly creative composition emerged. Centres of Manipuri dance were established at Ahmedabad, Calcutta and Shillong. Tagore's admiration of this dance form aroused great interest in it. In the 1930s, impressario Haren Ghosh toured the country with a troupe of Manipuri dancers. For the first time, the whole of India was exposed to the beauty and intricacies of Manipuri dance. It created a new awareness in every Indian of his rich and varied heritage.

Three great gurus were closely associated with this new era. They were Guru Amubi Singh, an associate of Uday Shankar, Guru Amudon Sharma who was attached to the royal palace in Manipur and Guru Atomba who taught at Shantiniketan, Calcutta and Shillong. It is, however, to Guru Amubi that the creation of dances for the stage must be attributed. His dance-drama compositions and solo pieces evince a continuous attempt to enrich the expressional content of Manipuri dance. The Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy, established in 1955, follows his stage tradition of slow, dignified movements; whatever the tempo and rhythmic variations imposed by the needs of the compositions, the guru struggled to project, at any cost, an image of subdued eloquence. Guru Amubi's style of presentation has been continued by competent disciples such as Guru Tarunkumar, Guru Rajkumar Singhajit (in his solo and duet numbers as well as in his ballets), Thingbaijam Babu (of the Nehru Dance Academy), and Devjani Chaliha (in her solo and group pieces).

Guru Bipin Singh, a disciple of Guru Amudon Sharma and the guru of the Jhaveri Sisters, belongs to the Manipuri tradition but with some structural and stylistic variations. He claims that his compositions take into consideration the requirements of the stage and are influenced by contemporary sensibilities rather than by stillness; they replace the comparatively introverted style of the Manipuri School by an expressionism imbued with colour and vibrancy. Both schools, that of Guru Amubi and that of Guru Bipin, are represented by competent dancers and gurus. They have introduced distinctive variations to the classical tradition resulting in two forms of beauty that explore different levels of structure and aesthetic possibilities.

Classical Manipuri dance is, basically, a group production in the style of a dance-drama, even though it contains solo items such as the *Krishna-abhisara* or *Radha-abhisara* within its structure. In recent years, various gurus have seriously attempted to present solo recitals as done in other dance forms such as Kathak, Odissi or Bharata Natyam. In this context special mention may be made of Rajkumar Prioyogopalsana who presented solo performances in various countries before World War II. His style was within the creative framework evolved by the great dancer Uday Shankar.

Another artiste, Kumari Savita Mehta, a disciple of Guru Amudon and a scholar in her own right, gave occasional solo recitals with considerable success, as did Devjani Chaliha in Calcutta. Guru Bipin Singh accepted the challenge and he, along with some of his disciples, have won national and even international recognition. In the last few years, the Manipur State Kala Akademi has organized annual solo dance festivals and this has triggered off an awareness of this possibility among the gurus and the artistes of Manipuri dance. Solo items however pose a challenging task for the gurus since, as mentioned earlier, the Manipuri dance form is normally performed by a group of dancers rather than a single dancer. Fortunately, solo dances have found universal acceptance from connoisseurs of this dance, and efforts are being made to develop an imaginative form that will fit within the requirements of the traditional framework and thereby continue to enrich this wonderful legacy from Manipur.

◇

Lai-haraoba
the gods rejoice

R. K. Achoubisana Singh

Over the years, the religion of Manipur has been inculcated with elements from animism, ancestor worship, the Tantric cult and Shaivism, and these different influences have inspired the villagers to create their own deities, characterized by peculiar individual as well as local traits. Thus, each of their performances connected with this religious festival varies slightly from that which is commonly accepted as the *Lai-haraoba.*

"Lai-haraoba" literally means the merry-making of the gods, and the festival is celebrated every year, sometime in April or May, in different areas of the State. The celebrations are spread over a long period that could last from seven to thirty days. Each *leikai* (region) has its own *Umang-lai* (village divinity). The festival is performed in front of a particular *lainingthou* (god) and *lairembi* (goddess). The venue of the performance is known as the *lai-bung.* The *Lai-haraoba* consists of three varieties which have arisen because of regional differences. They are the *Kanglei, Chakpa* and *Moirang.* A fourth variation, the *Kakching-haraoba,* exhibits characteristics of both the *Kanglei* and *Chakpa.*

The *Lai-haraoba* has borrowed freely from Meitei legends, particularly the tragic love story of Khamba and Thoibi described in the epic *Moirang-parba.* Khamba and Thoibi were both expert dancers and are even considered to be the Manipuri counterparts of Shiva and Parvati. Their story is an important part of the *Lai-haraoba* celebrations.

The *maibas* (high priests) function as the preceptors, directors and conductors of the rituals of this festival. The dance sequences are executed by the *maibis* (high priestesses—who, according to the Manipuri tradition, can be either male or female). The religious rites, rituals and dances associated with this festival are extremely complex and intricate, but, fortunately, they have been systematically codified, with the result that each detail is observed with strict discipline during the performance.

Early records of the origins of the *Lai-haraoba* are available in several ancient texts, such as the *Leithak-leikha-rol, Thirel-layat* and *Pudil.* The procedure of the *Lai-haraoba* ritual is encountered in the ancient lyric, *Lai-hoilouba.*

The Rituals

One day before the commencement of the *Lai-haraoba* festival, the ritual of *Lai-phisetpa* is performed by the *maibas* and *maibis.* In this ritual, idols of *lainingthou* and *lairembi* are made from bamboo and are clothed.

The festival begins with the ritual of *Lai-ikouba,* which signifies the summoning of the spirit of the deity from the water. The *maibas* and *maibis,* along with people of the village, walk to the designated *ekoupham* (river or pond) in rows of two. The seniormost *maiba* invokes the god by throwing *konyai* (gold and silver coins) and rice into the water. One *maibi* dances the *Laiching-jagoi* (the dance of summoning the deity). Meanwhile, another *maibi*

produces the *hirilung,* which is a special thread, from an *ehaiphu* (earthern pitcher), and ties the *leiyom* (a particular species of leaves) to a stick three times. Holding it in her right hand, she dips the stick in the water and then, with the left hand, rings a bell, chanting the *laihourol* (hymns of creation) till such time as the spirit of the deity enters her body. Immediately afterwards she falls into a trance and begins to predict the future of the people.

Once this ritual is completed, the procession returns to the village. This part of the ceremony is known as the *Hikaba.* The spirit of the god and that of the goddess now reside respectively in two *ehaiphus* carried by two *lai-pubas* (persons specifically designated for the task). This procession is headed by a *maibi* who dances, rings a bell in time with the *pena* (a single-stringed instrument) and beats the *harao-pung* (a drum specially associated with the *Lai-haraoba*). Lastly, there occurs a ritualistic sequence, corresponding to the infusion of the spirits in the urns, by which the installation of the god and goddess is carried out. After the installation ceremony, the divinities are worshipped daily. Prescribed rituals are performed in the morning as well as in the evening. The morning rituals include:

Lai-yakaiba: the awakening of the deities by singers with *penas.*

Laimang-phamba: when the *maibi* predicts the future.

Jagoi-katpa: the dance of the *maibis.*

The evening rituals include:

Lei-langba: men, women and children in their best traditional costumes go to the *lai-bung,* the venue of the festival, to offer flowers to the deities. The actual offering of the flowers is what is known as the *Lei-langba.*

1. The *Moirang-haraoba.* At Moirang, a place associated with the legendary lovers Khamba and Thoibi, a chariot procession is held every twelve years. Photo: courtesy, Manipuri Nartanalaya.

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2. A *pena*-player. The *pena*, a traditional Manipuri single-stringed instrument, is made of a piece of bamboo inserted into a coconut shell. Horsehair bunched together serve as the strings for the *pena* and the *cheijing* (bow). Tiny bells tied at the end of the *cheijing* produce regular tinkling sounds at each bowing. An embroidered piece of cloth hangs from the top of the *pena*. The player dances in tune with the music. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

3. A *harao-pung* player. The *harao-pung*, a special type of drum beaten with a stick, is used for the *Lai-haraoba* dance. Photo: courtesy, Manipuri Nartanalaya.

Hoi-laoba: this signifies the singing, by the *maibas*, of lyrics expounding ethical wisdom. The *maibas* are accompanied by *pena*-players and a *harao-pung*. A group of men in traditional dress joins them in the singing while clapping.
Thougal-jagoi: men and women happily dance the *Thougal-jagoi* with *maibis* to invoke the deities.
Laiching-jagoi: the *maibis* dance with the *langthrei* (a special leaf) held between their fingers. This sequence involves a variety of expressive movements where the spirit of the deity is invited to enter each *maibi*'s body. It also includes the *Laisem-jagoi* or the enactment of the creation of the earth by nine gods (*laibungthou-mapan*) and seven goddesses (*lainura-taret*).
Laibou-chongba: an important sequence in the *Lai-haraoba* festival. No one is allowed to leave the ritual ground once the *Laibou-chongba* (dance of creation of the human body and its different activities) has started. For the *Laibou-chongba*, the *maibis* are arranged in two lines of *lainingthous* (gods) and *lairembis* (goddesses). Rows of male and female performers line up behind the members of the *Laibou* procession, consisting of eight pairs and headed by the *maibis*. When the procession nears the *lais* (deities), the participants make "hoirou" and "hoya" sounds. Then the two rows of the procession move in a circle and the *maibis* dance and describe the primitive concept of cosmology through 364 sequences of hand gestures.
Hakchang-sagatpa: the various stages of the creation of the human body are expressed by symbolic suggestions through sixty-four sequences of hand gestures, in accompaniment to the lyrics of the *Anoirol* sung by the *pena*-player.

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4. The *Laiching-jagoi. Maibis* dance holding *langthrei* between their fingers. Photo: courtesy, Manipuri Nartanalaya.

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5. The *Laisem-jagoi.* The first pose of a sequence which describes, in dance, the creation of the earth. Artiste: Niveshwari Maibi. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

6a

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6k

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6o

6p

6q

6r

6. The *Hakchang-sagatpa.* In this sequence, the *maibi* describes the creation of the human body. She starts by describing the different parts of the head and face: a. *Lawai* (vertex); b. *Chirai* (temporal); c. *Kokchi* (lateral temporal); d. *Laibak* (forehead); e. *Pishum* (eyebrows); f. *Mitchi* (angle of eyes—lateral); g. *Mit* (eyes); h. *Nakhang* (bridge of nose); i. *Naton* (nose); j. *Naton Nakchi* (alae of nose); k. *Khajai* (cheeks); l. *Natonsumang* (philtrum); m. *Chinban* (lips); n. *Ya* (teeth); o. *Khadang* (chin); p. *Na* (ears); q. *Nakong Chakpra* (ear holes); r. *Lukham* (occipital region). Line drawings: Mantosh Lal.

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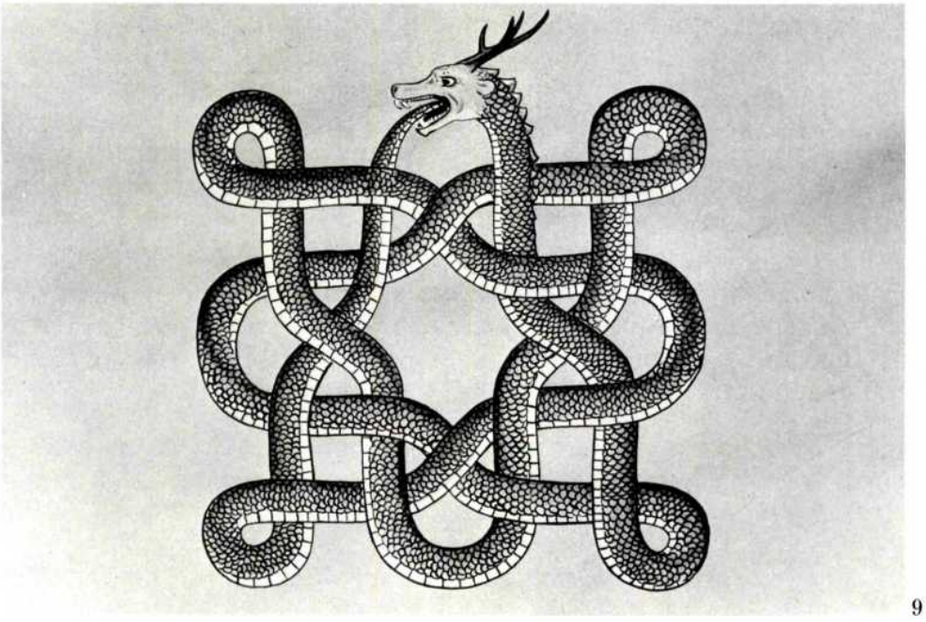

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7. The *Yumsarol.* A sequence depicting the digging of the ground for laying the foundation of a house. Artiste: Rajani Maibi. Photo: courtesy, the Jhaveri Sisters.

8. The *Phisarol-jagoi.* This sequence depicts the process of spinning and weaving. Here the *maibi* shows the rolling of cotton before spinning. Artiste: Kumar Maibi. Photo: courtesy, Manipuri Nartanalaya.

9. The *yumjao-paphal.* Towards the conclusion of the *Lai-haraoba* dance, the dancers move in a single line along an abstract pattern signifying the entwined serpent (*yumjao-paphal*), a symbol of Pakhangba (the snake-god). Photo: courtesy, Manipuri Nartanalaya.

Angang-unaba: various stages of the birth of a child are expressed by forty sequences of hand gestures.
Yumsarol: the *maibi*s, through forty-four sequences of hand gestures, indicate in minute detail the process of building a thatched hut. The completed house is dedicated to the deities.
Panthoibi-jagoi: the amorous dance of the god Nongpok-Ningthou and the goddess Panthoibi (believed to be the Manipuri counterparts of Shiva and Parvati) takes place in fourteen sequences of hand gestures.
Panyanlon-jagoi: the dance of cotton growing is suggested through thirty-nine sequences of hand gestures which describe the different stages of growth from the sprouting of the cotton seed to its flowering.
Phisarol-jagoi: a detailed expression of the weaving of cloth by 146 sequences of hand gestures is performed by the *maibi*s. The cloth is then dedicated to the deities.
Lonkhol-jagoi: through nine sequences of hand gestures, the *maibi*s dance the different stages of fishing.
Paton-jagoi: the dance of harvesting is described in two sequences of hand gestures.
Phibul-jagoi: the *maiba*s and *maibi*s perform a dance imitating a ball game in six sequences of hand gestures.
Leiren-mathek: a *maiba* indicates the movement of a snake in a single line which follows the specific pattern of the *yumjao-paphal* (a traditional snake pattern), a symbol of the snake-god, Pakhangba.
Wakol: all the cultic objects are kept inside the temple and then the *Wakol,* a concluding song, is sung.
Naosam-ishei: the *pena*-player sings the cradle song (*Naosam-ishei*) to put the deities to sleep.

The concluding rituals include:

Lai-lam-thokpa: two days before the *Lai-haraoba* festival ends, the idols of the *lainingthou* and *lairembi* are put in a palanquin and taken in a procession to a chosen spot outside the *lai-bung,* and the same daily rituals are performed there.
Kanglei-thokpa: on the penultimate day, a *maibi* goes into a trance, utters the *laipou* (message from the deities) and chooses a bride from among the audience. She is ordained as a *maibi* and devotes her life to the service of the deities.
Lairoi: on the last day of the *Lai-haraoba* festival, after concluding the daily evening rites, all the *maibi*s, *pena*-players and *maiba*s sing *lairoi,* the ancient traditional lyrics, in the old Meitei language.

After the *Lai-haraoba* festival is concluded, the next day there is a ceremonial function known as the *Lai-khomba.* In this ritual, all the items used in the festival such as flowers, fruits and plantain leaves are buried in the premises of the temple.

Although the origins of the *Lai-haraoba* are lost in dim antiquity, the dancers of Manipur have maintained its continuity from generation to generation. They have preserved, practised and performed this ritual dance festival and celebrate it to this day. It is thus that the *Lai-haraoba* festival plays a significant role in inspiring and guiding the emotional and cultural life of the Manipuri people.

◇

Sankirtan
the dance of devotion

Surachand Sharma

With the advent of Vaishnavism in Manipur, the *Sankirtan* (a form of community prayer and an invocation to God) became an integral part of religious expression and produced a profound effect on the lives and artistic manifestations of the people of Manipur.

Traditionally, the *Sankirtan* follows an extremely strict code in its performance. All its elements—such as the dance, (its composition and choreography), songs, music, *talas* (time measures) and rhythm patterns as well as its costumes—are determined by specific rules and regulations. The performance conforms to a pre-determined order of ritualistic preliminary practices, irrespective of the type of celebration. The *Sankirtan* begins with a *purvaranga* in which the performers change into their costumes and bow to the presiding deity, the invitees and the householder. These formalities are followed by *lei-chandan* (the serving of flowers and sandalwood paste) to each of the *Sankirtan* performers by three or four brahmins, called the *arangpham*, specially engaged for attending to all the details of the *Sankirtan*. Each performer then ceremoniously offers the flowers and sandalwood paste to the musical instrument before touching his own forehead to it. The conclusion of *boriba*—the distribution of clothes and betel leaves to the performers by the *arangpham*—signifies that the *Sankirtan* is now entrusted to the performers. Finally the *mandapa-mapu* (the brahmin appointed to conduct the ceremony) recites the inaugural *shloka* (verse) or *jayadhwani* (extolment of the deity). No *pala* (group of male dancers) is complete without a pair of drummers, while the inclusion of a conch blower is restricted to a few *Sankirtan* performances. Immediately after the *jayadhwani,* the drummers play the *mridanga raga*—a particular type of composition of syllables of the drum (*mridanga*)—and the chief singer utters the auspicious words "Hari Bol," to which the rest of the singers respond with the words "Hare Hare." At the end of the *mridanga raga,* the chief singer begins the *raga-alap,* which delineates the basic notes of the melody, with the slow sound of "Aa"—the first syllable of the *Sangita Shastra*'s (a musical *Atanari.* The other singers echo this note. After the guru-*vandana* (bowing to the guru), the *sabha-vandana* (bowing to the audience), and offering salutations to Chaitanya, the *Sankirtan* performers come to the main part of the performance which consists of the singing of an episode relating to Radha and Krishna—devotional lyrics, by Vaishnavite poets, known as the *padavalis.*

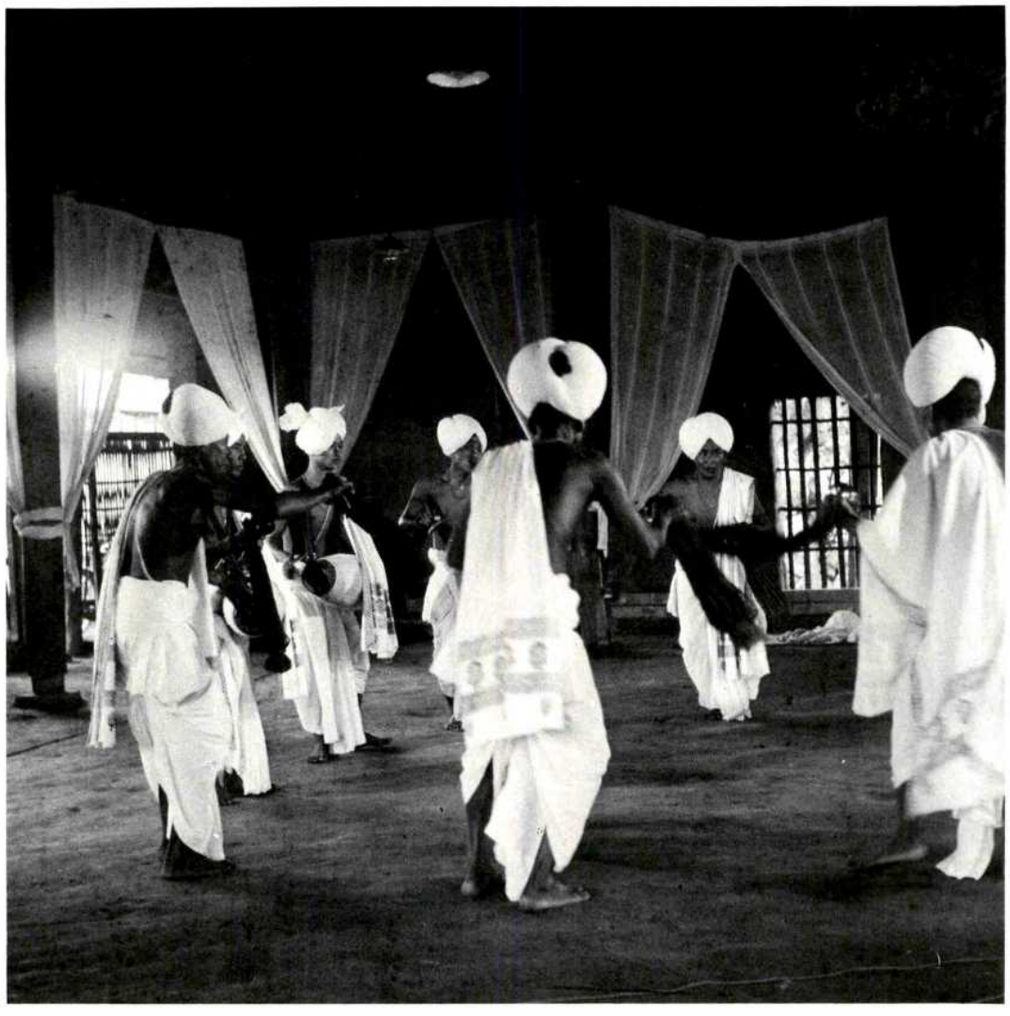
Nata-pala

There are a number of different kinds of *Sankirtans*, of which the *Nata-pala*—involving a group of male drum and cymbal dancers—is the most complex. The *Nata-pala* is performed throughout the year at numerous festivals related to the lives and the legend of Krishna and Radha, with the exceptions of Holi, Ratha-yatra, Rakhal-rasa and Bashak. It is performed on important occasions during a person's life-cycle, such as the *annaprashana*

(giving an infant solid food for the first time), *karna-vedha* (piercing the ears of an infant), *upanayana* (the initiation into caste status and sacred thread ceremony), marriage, *shradha* (death ceremony) and the death anniversary known as *phirol.* Women of diverse age-groups also have their own *Sankirtan* groups, each known as the *Nupi-pala,* which perform at festivals such as Jalakeli (the dalliance of Lord Krishna with Radha in the water), Durga-puja (the invocation of the goddess Durga) and Jhulan (the swing festival), as well as at social functions. On such occasions, they sing appropriate songs accompanied with cymbals.

The *Nata-pala* also serves as a fitting prologue to the performances of the *Rasa-lila.* The *Nata-pala* involves difficult and highly evolved dance forms such as the *kartal-cholom* (cymbal dance) and the *pung-cholom* (drum dance). The word *cholom* is derived from the word *chalanam* which is one of the three main types of *tandavas* (the virile and agile aspects of Manipuri dance)—*gunthanam, chalanam* and *prasaranam,* as described in the *Govinda-sangita-lila-vilasa.* The *cholom* strictly observes the divisions of the human body as explained in terms of *anga* (the major limbs), *pratyanga* (the minor limbs) and *upanga* (a subdivision related to the movement of the minor limbs), as shown in the Appendix.

The basic *phirep* (standing pose known also as *sthanaka*) of the *kartal-cholom* and the *pung-cholom* is the same. For both, the performers stand erect with the heels apart at a distance approximating the width of three fingers and the toes pointing diagonally outwards.



1. A group of *Nata-pala* performers singing while dancing in a village temple *mandapa* (pavilion). This type of *Sankirtan* is performed on many social and religious occasions. Photo: Angana Jhaveri.

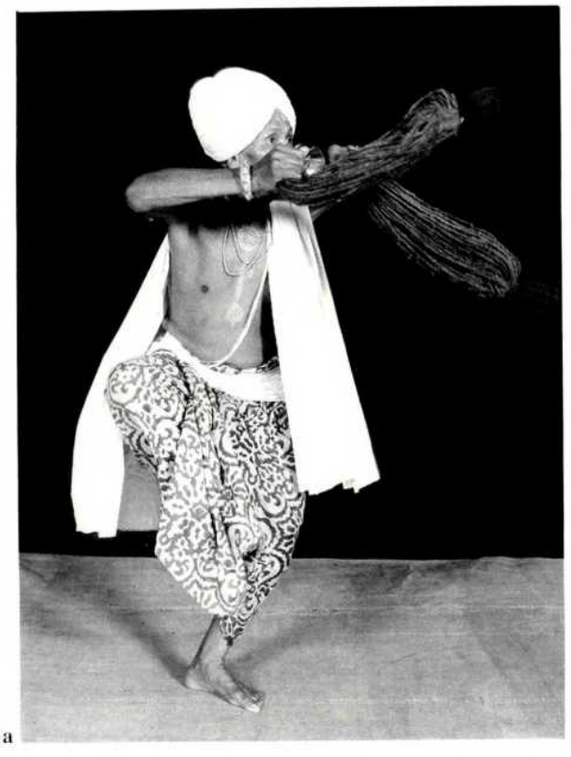
2. The *Nupi-pala*, a group of female dancers and singers who perform the *Sankirtan* on religious and social occasions. Artistes: Ranjana Devi and group. Photo: courtesy, Manipuri Nartanalaya.

3. A *Nata-pala* performance in the Shri Shri-Govindaji temple, in front of the images of Krishna and Radha. This form is also known as *Anouba-pala* (new form) and was introduced during the rule of King Bhagyachandra in the eighteenth century. The dance serves as the prologue to the *Rasa-lila*. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

In the *kartal-cholom,* the dancers first stand in the basic pose with cymbals in their hands and then commence rhythmic movements, striking the cymbals against each other to reproduce the *bols* (syllables of the accompanying *mridanga*) known in Manipur as the *kartal-marol* (the language of the *kartal*—the playing of the *kartal* according to the syllables of the drum). There are fixed strokes for each syllable of the *mridanga*. The movements are in accordance with the tune, the rhythm and the sentiment expressed in the accompanying song. The essential beauty of the dance emerges from the juxtaposition of movements that are both energetic and vigorous with those of grace and delicacy. Although the movements of the dancers must appear forceful, they should not seem harsh; they must be abundant, yet restrained; they must be exact and striking, yet flowing and continuous. The dancers move forwards and backwards, sometimes emulating the ponderous gait of an elephant, at other times the graceful movement of the swan or the snake. All these movements, including the spirals and jumps, exhibit an innate sense of balance and poise which enhances the devout atmosphere of the occasion.

The *pung-cholom,* the drum dance performed by two male dancers, in the *Nata-pala* is uniquely Manipuri. Here, the dancers perform to the accompaniment of drums which they play themselves. Although this dance resembles the *kartal-cholom* in terms of its standing postures and, to some extent, in its movements as well, the dancers of the *pung-cholom* are permitted greater freedom than those of the *kartal-cholom.* The movements of the dances often appear acrobatic—particularly when the performers execute a variety of spiral movements—and demand a keen sense of balance and rhythm. By means of drum syllables and body movements, the dancer seeks to imitate nature, often reproducing sounds such as that of drizzling rain or thunder, and the gaits of birds or animals.

The *Nata-pala* is normally performed in front of temples by a *pala* which comprises *kartal* players, *mridanga* players and singers. The two *pung-yeibas* (*mridanga* players) stand one to the left and the other to the right of the temple. Next to the *mridanga* player



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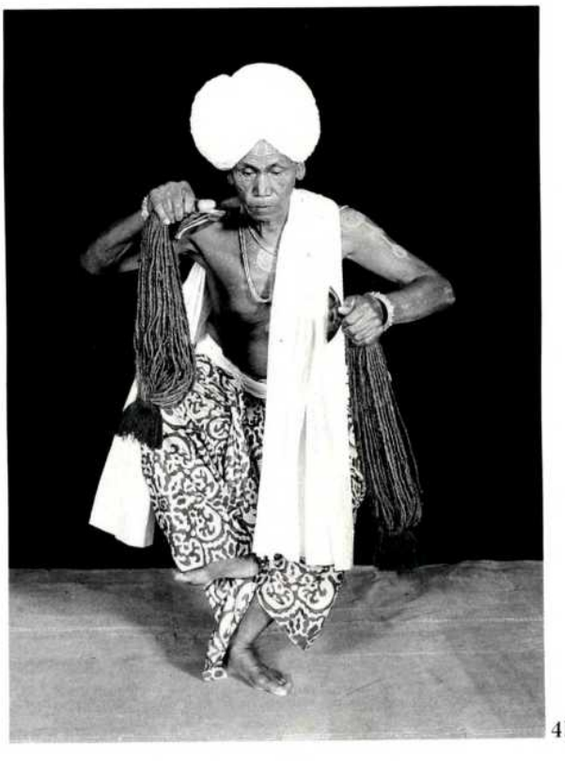


4b

4. The *kartal-cholom* (cymbal dance) in which the dancer sings and plays the cymbals. A renowned feature of this dance form is the portrayal of elements in nature—particularly of plants and animals. Artiste: Guru Angahan Sharma. Photos: Pankaj Shah.
a. The *Rajamel.* The movements based on the time measure *Rajamel* form a significant section in the *Nata-pala.*
b. The *Shamu-sajet,* the gait of an elephant.

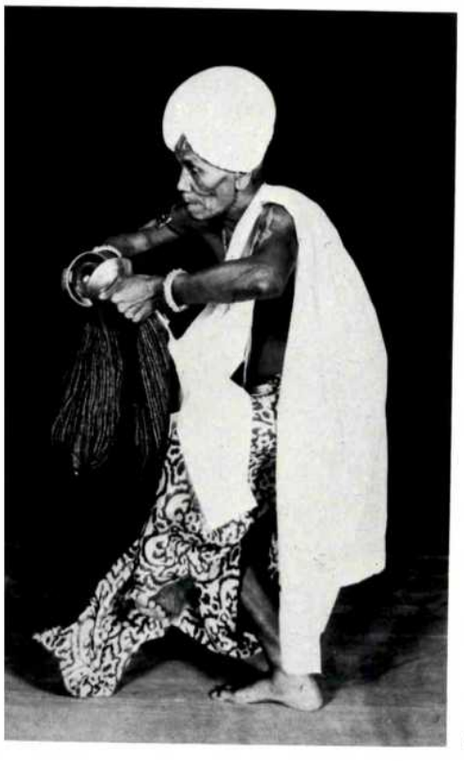
on the left, stands the *duhar* (the leader of the *kartal* players) with other *kartal* dancers. These dancers form a semicircle behind the *mridanga* players. The *khombangbas* (singers) complete the circle. Their leader, the *isei-hanba,* stands in front of them within the circle. During the performance of the *cholom,* the entire *pala* moves either clockwise or counter-clockwise.

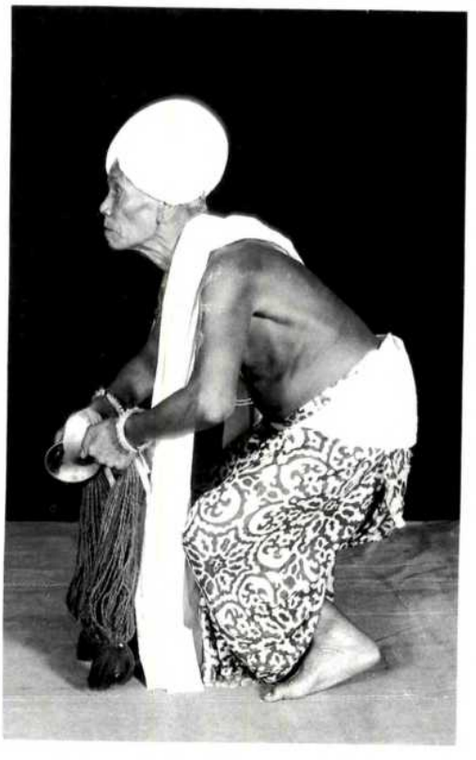
Since the *mridanga* is important both in the *pung-cholom* and the *kartal-cholom, talas* assume a predominating importance. As mentioned earlier, the *Sankirtan* begins with a prologue of a *mridanga raga,* generally the *Raga Achouba* or the *Raga Nata,* and the *Sanchara* (a composition that follows the *raga*). These are succeeded by *talas* and their rhythm patterns, such as *Tintal, Mel* (*Bedighat, Lambighat, Setu* and *Kata*), *Tanchep* and *Menkup.* Between these particular *talas*, the performers are free to play other *talas* and their rhythm patterns, along with the songs appropriate for each episode, to enrich the performance.

The origin of the *Nata-pala* lies in the *Bangdesh-pala* (an old form of *Sankirtan*) which came into existence in AD 1709 during the reign of King Garibnivas. The members of the *Bangdesh-pala* were appointed to perform the *ashtakal* (eight different services offered to the idol of the Shri Shri-Govindaji temple). They used a different kind of drum and pair of cymbals. The *talas*, their rhythm patterns and songs also differ. The *Bangdesh-pala* is also known as *Leibakchaba-pala* (after the name of Guru Leibakchaba) and, subsequently, as the *Sevak-pala* due to minor changes made by his disciples.

Manoharasai-pala

A new variety of the *Sankirtan,* known as the *Manoharasai-pala*, was introduced in Manipur in AD 1850 during the reign of King Chandrakirti. Its origin lies in Bengal where it was performed in the sixteenth century for the first time by the Vaishnava saint,





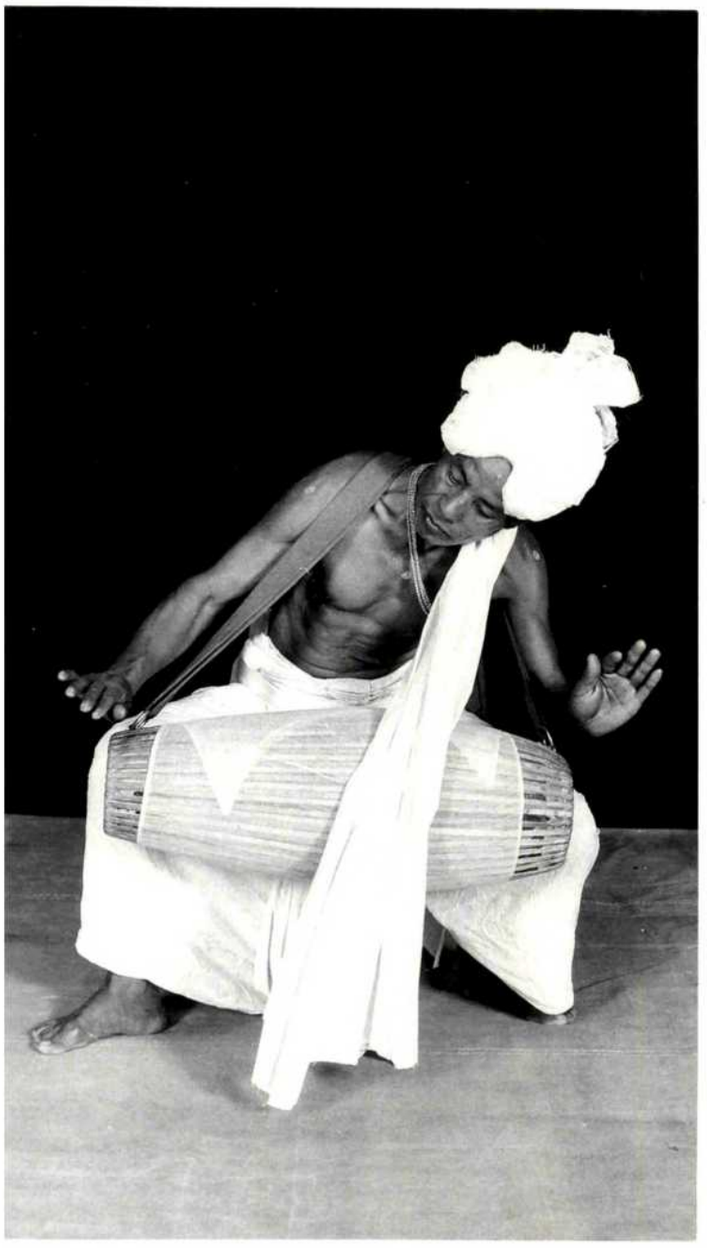
4d

4e

4c. The *Urok-sajet*, the gait of a stork.
4d. The *Iruppa*. A movement delineating the motions of diving and surfacing. It could portray a fish, a bird or even a person.
4e. The *Maron-maron-sajet-mathek*. This movement reveals the manner in which the leaves sprout from the trunk of a plantain tree.

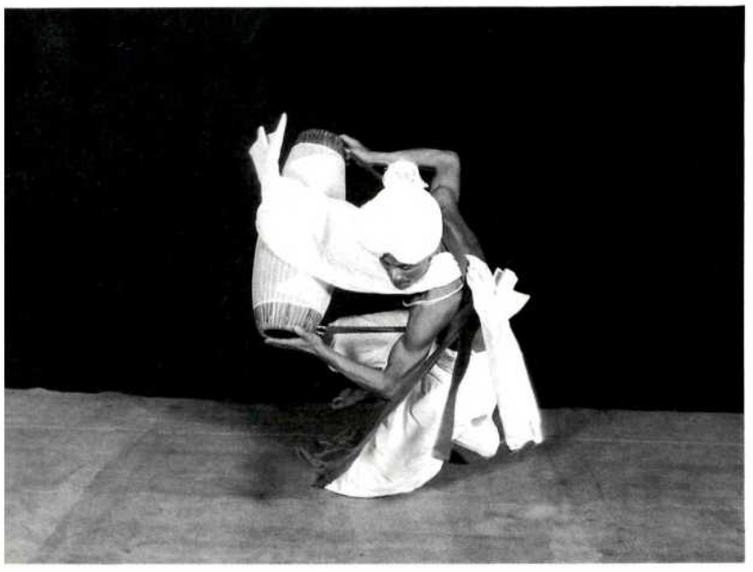
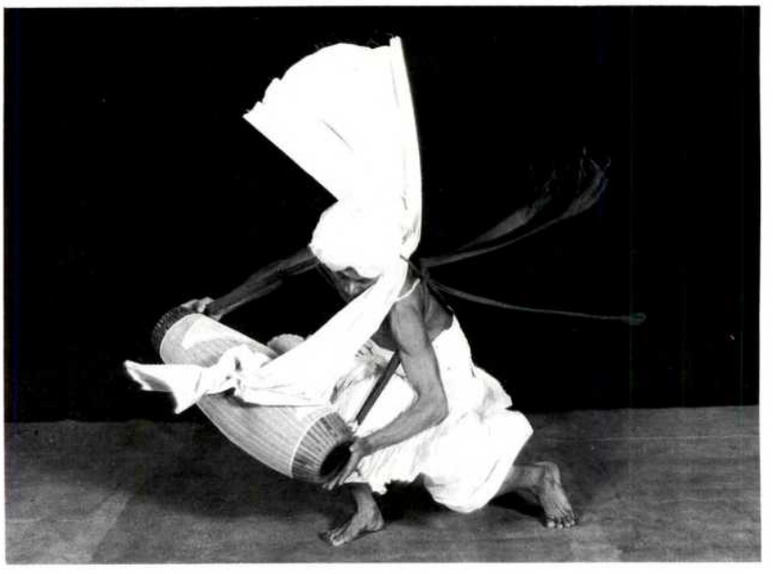
Narottam Thakur, at an important religious festival at Kheturi. In Manipur, the *Manoharasai-pala* absorbed several elements of the *Nata-pala*, even though it continued to employ the *khol* (Bengal drum) instead of the *pung* (Manipuri drum). It retained its own system of *tala*s and rhythm patterns and was sung in the style of the Bengal *kirtan*.

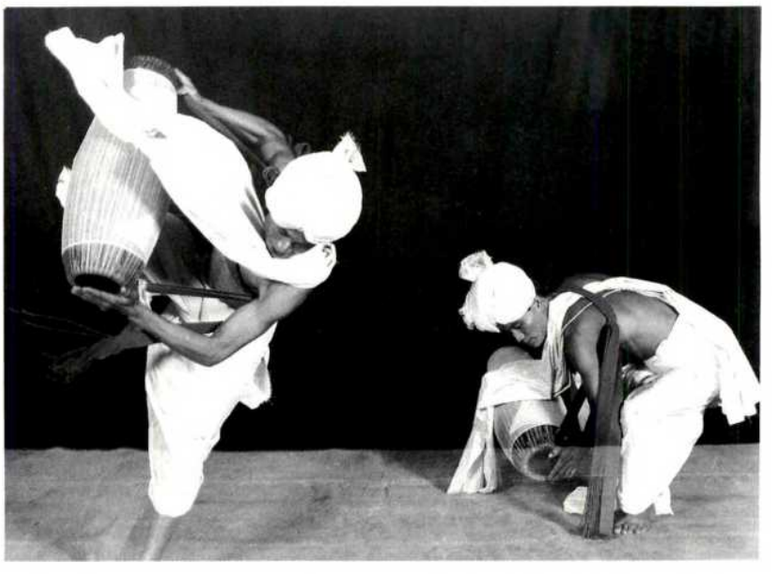
One of the minor offshoots of the *Manoharasai-pala* is the *Dhappala*, in which the *dholak* and *pakhawaj* (both percussion instruments) are used instead of the *khol* and cymbals. The *Dhappala* assumes a different nomenclature on certain occasions. For example, when it is dedicated to the *Sayan-pali Sankirtan* during September/October, it is known as the *Nam-pala*, and when performed at a *shradha* ceremony using the *jhal* (another type of cymbal), it is known as the *Chaitanya Sampradaya*.

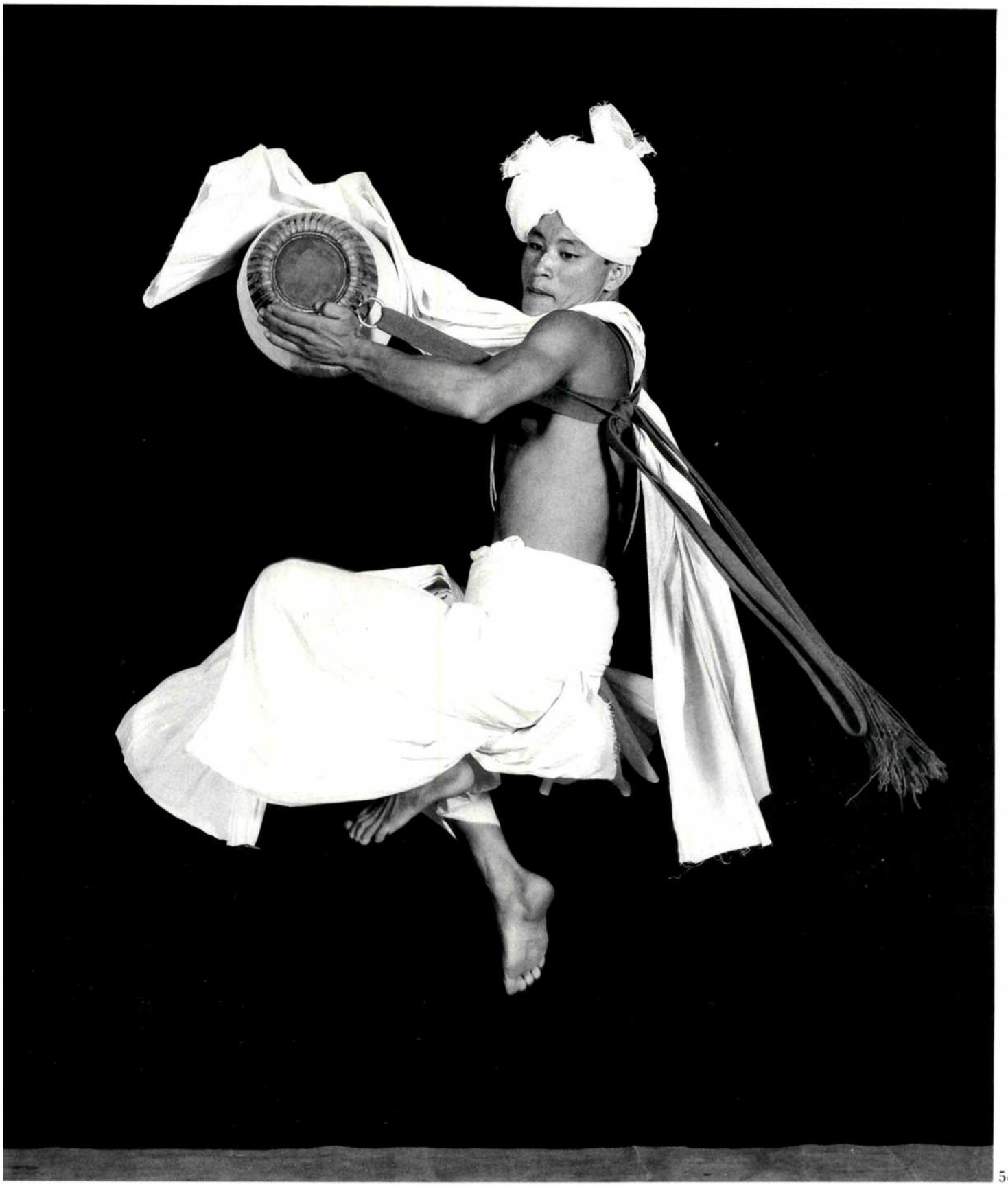


5c

5. The *pung-cholom* (drum dance) where the dancer is also the drummer. Photos: Pankaj Shah.
a. The *Marumanaohanba*. The dancer plays with both hands on one side of the drum. Artiste: Biramangal Singh.
b. The *Thongkhong-Anemba*. A movement where the bend of the body and knees is emphasized. Artiste: Amuyaima Singh.
c. The *Achongbi*. A sideways jumping movement. Artiste: Thanin Singh.

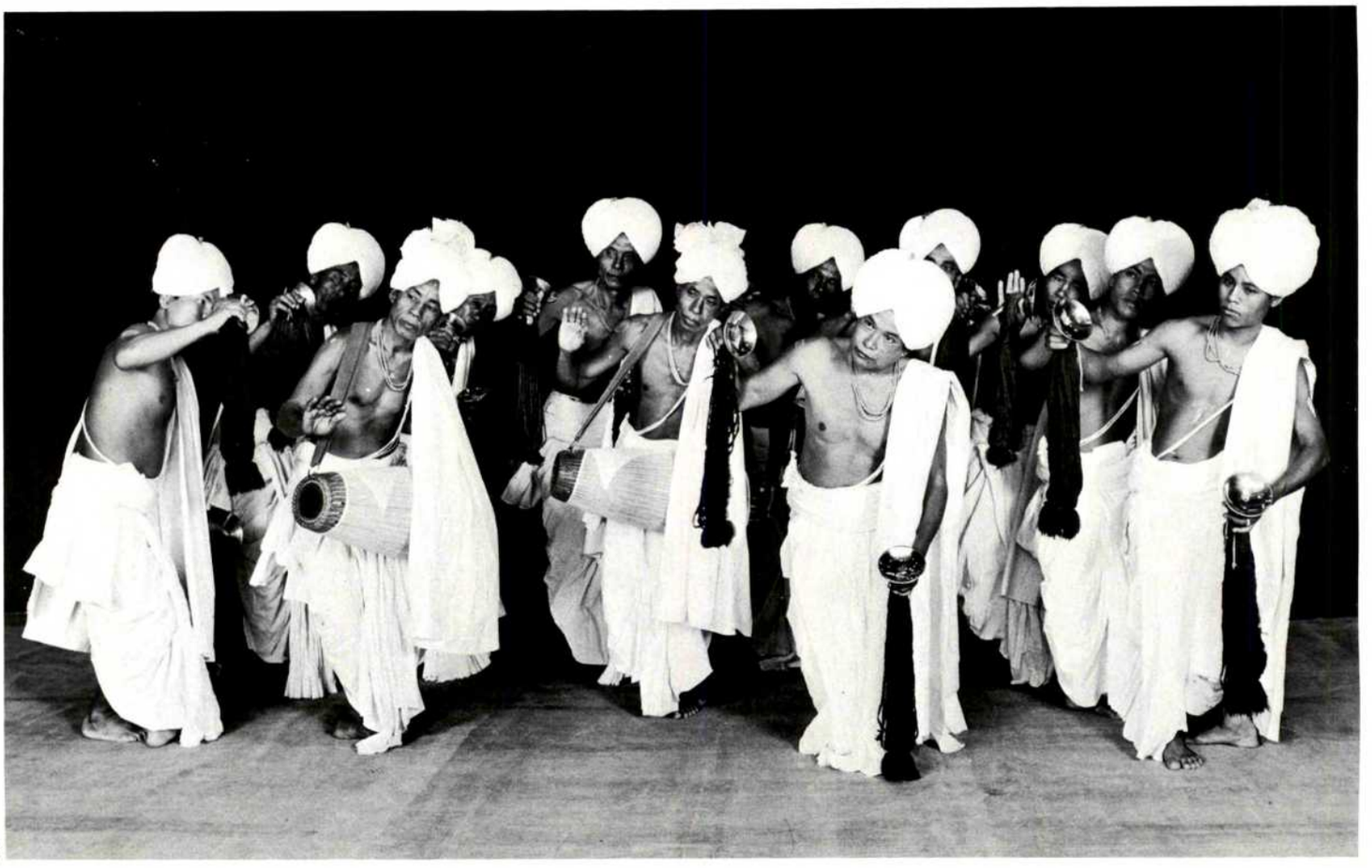




5d

5d. The *Areibi*. Different types of spiral movements in which the drum dancer sits and spins; stands and spins; and bends, jumps and spins. Artiste: Kumar Singh.

6. A *Nata-pala* performance comprising two *pung-yeibas* (drummers), the *isei-hanba* (chief singer) and the *duhar* (chief cymbal dancer) with dancers and singers. Artistes: members of the Tauryatrik Kala Vikas Sangha Nata College. Photo: Pankaj Shah.



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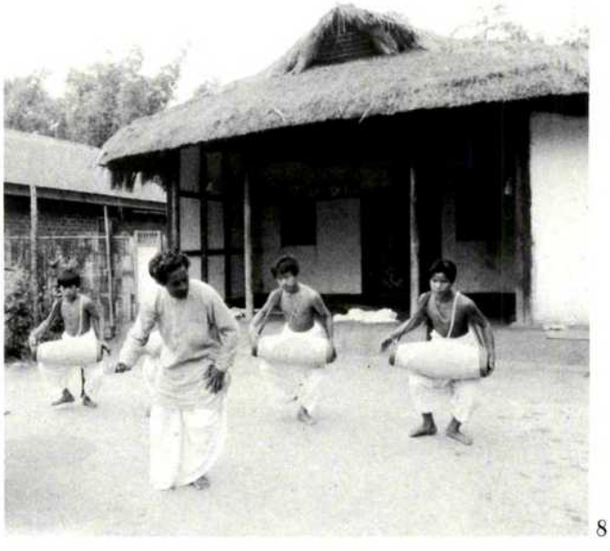

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7. The *Bangdesh-pala*, an older form of *Sankirtan*, also known as *Ariba-pala*. This differs from the *Nata-pala* in that its dancers use a larger drum and cymbals with smaller tassels. Photo: courtesy, the Manipur State Kala Academy.

8. Training with a guru. Guru Amuyaima Singh teaching the *pung-cholom* to his students in the courtyard of a *yumjao* (traditional home)—an example of the *gurukul* system in which the students learn from the guru while staying with him and serving him. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

Dhrumel

Yet another variety of the *Sankirtan* is the *Dhrumel* in which the number of drummers may vary from four to one hundred. It provides the prelude to the *Ahoratra kirtan*—a continuous twenty-four-hour *Sankirtan* performance executed by different *palas*, each having fourteen drummers, in rotation. There are four types of *Dhrumel:* the *Maha-dhrumel, Nityai-dhrumel, Goura-dhrumel* and *Devi-dhrumel.* They each differ from the other in terms of their composition of rhythm patterns. Each *Dhrumel* is associated with a certain occasion.

An artiste is accepted as a member of a *pala* only after long and arduous training either in the *kartal-cholom* or the *pung-cholom,* as well as in music with a recognized guru.

Traditionally, composers and choreographers of the other dance forms of Manipur, including the *Rasa-lila,* seek inspiration from the *kartal-cholom* and *pung-cholom.* Over the years, dance and music have been highly refined and developed in the performance of the *Sankirtan.*

APPENDIX

MOVEMENTS OF DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE BODY IN THE *PUNG-CHOLOM*

KOKLEI OR *KOKHAI* (HEAD): *SHIRA* IN SANSKRIT
Nikpa: to shake the head horizontally
Leiba: to form a circle with the head either to the right or to the left
Khatpa or *Chikhat:* to move the head diagonally and give an upward jerk

9

9. The *Dhrumel*, a type of *Sankirtan*. Here two groups of drummers compete with each other in a village temple *mandapa* (pavilion). Photo: Pankaj Shah.

NGAK (NECK): *GRIVA* IN SANSKRIT (including head movements that originate from the movements of the neck)
Akhakpa: to move the head horizontally and throw it downwards diagonally
Ahumba: to jerk the head upwards and bring it down again
Chatpa: to form slowly smaller circles with the head on both sides
Afeiba: when the neck and the head naturally follow the movements of the entire body
Taminnaba: when the torso is abruptly bent then the head is also suddenly brought down
Hanba: to turn the head enabling it to look behind
Thaba: to stretch the neck in front
Chepta: to bend the neck on one side
Athekpa: to form the two biggest possible circles with the head, one on the right and another on the left
Sepchatnaba: when the head is bent on one side but follows the swing of the vertical movements of the body

LENGJUM (SHOULDER): *SKANDHA* IN SANSKRIT
Hikthaba: to droop at the shoulder
Inkhatpa: to raise the shoulder
Khappa: to jerk up and down

THA (TORSO): *VAKSHA* IN SANSKRIT
Arongba: torso out, backbone straight
A-uppa: torso kept horizontally
Taba: to turn the torso sideways and to bend it slightly downwards
Cheppa: to keep the body bent on one side while ending a movement
Hanba: to move the torso in seemingly circular movements while moving forward
Leiba: to move the torso upward to the right and then to the left alternately

KHWANG (WAIST): *KATI* IN SANSKRIT
Namba: a movement originating from the waist while bending forward in three ways—slight bending, medium bending and extreme bending
Tingba: to stand erect
Thekpa: to bend from one side to another

PHEI (THIGH): *URU* IN SANSKRIT
Namba: slight projection, greater projection, extreme projection while keeping the foot on the ground
Thangatpa: raising the leg
a. *Hunna Thangatpa:* the leg is raised in a startling manner in front and the bent knee is lifted higher than the level of the thigh
b. *Thangatna Leiba:* the leg is raised horizontally
c. *Namlei:* the bent knee is raised diagonally

KHUK-KI (KNEES): *JANU* IN SANSKRIT
Bagleiba: to touch the knees to the ground while turning on the floor
Khudak Kunba: to touch the knees to the ground while stretching the legs behind

KHONG (FOOT): *PADA* IN SANSKRIT
Khongpak Netpa: to place the foot flat on the ground
Khongchep: touching the ground with one side of the foot
Khongdon Kangba: to stand on the heels
Khuning Kangba: to stand on the toes

◇

Rasa-lila
the sacred circle

Angana Jhaveri

The Shri Shri-Govindaji temple at Imphal is the most revered shrine in Manipur and the focus of all major Vaishnavite religious activities in the region. Performances of the *Rasa-lila* take place on the night of the full moon during the different seasons. They are first presented here and only after that can they be enacted at local *khulak* (village) temples.

The *rasa-mandapa* (pavilion) of this temple is the venue of *Rasa-lila* performances held annually at auspicious times determined by the lunar calendar. Each performance begins at dusk and ends at dawn. Five days before the actual performance, a ceremony known as the *Rasa-arambha* (commencement) is performed by the *rasadhari* (director/teacher) and a brahmin priest. Prayers in Sanskrit are recited, first invoking Lord Ganesha and then Lord Vishnu in all his incarnations. The ceremony is attended by the performers as well as their family members, some of whom help sponsor the performance.

Soon after the ceremony of propitiation of the gods, preparations for the performance begin. The *rasa-mandapa* is washed and made ready, and *phak*s (straw mats) are arranged in neat rows for the audience on all four sides surrounding the performance area. The lights—an assortment of incandescent bulbs, tube lights and paraffin lamps—are installed. The *karigar* or scene operator fixes the rope to the central wooden dais, a rotating platform for the images of Krishna and Radha, to be manipulated throughout the performance.

Devotees from neighbouring villages arrive a day or two earlier and reside at the temple. Elderly ladies lend a hand with the preparations and, as they string flower garlands, they chant the various names of Krishna. Gradually the devotional feeling in their singing and in their services mounts and, on the night of the performance, when the temple bells ring and the conch bellows its loudest sound, the excitement is contagious and carries across the *leikai*s (surrounding precincts).

Meanwhile, in their homes, devotees dressed in their temple attire carefully apply cool sandalwood paste *tilak*s (religious marks) on their foreheads. The women wear shell-pink *phanek*s (sarong-like lower garments) and crisp white *inaphi*s (scarves) while the men are immaculately dressed in stark white kurtas and dhotis.

Outside, the full moon sheds its fluorescent rays on to tin rooftops. Fireflies appear and disappear like splinters of light dancing in the bushes. Eager to see their beloved Krishna and Radha, the devotees hasten to the *rasa-mandapa* of the Shri Shri-Govindaji temple which is transformed into Brindavan for the night.

The temple, which houses the images of Krishna and Radha, faces eastward and is aligned with the *rasa-mandapa*. The devotees enter the north-west side of the temple, bow gracefully before the deities and proceed to the *rasa-mandapa* for the performance. This gesture of deep respect and love indicates the devotional feeling that pervades this event.

The images of Krishna and Radha are brought from the temple interior and installed on the central dais in the *rasa-mandapa* amidst joyous cries of "Hari Bol." With a cue from

the *mandapa-mapu* (person presiding over the performance), the *Sankirtan* prelude begins. *Sankirtan* is a ritual performance of ecstatic chanting and dancing by a group of male singers and percussionists. It begins with a slow haunting rhythm played on drums and large cymbals. As Manipuris were introduced to Krishna *bhakti* (devotion to Krishna) through the lineage of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu of Bengal, the *Sankirtan* singers first invoke his divine presence. They sing of his great love and dedication and of his ardent longing to see the *Rasa-lila*. These remembrances evoke a great crescendo of emotion played on the cymbals and drums as the players dance with vigorous abandon. Their singing rises well above the climactic percussion, its pitch conveying profound emotion. Finally the rhythm slows and in quiet tones the *Sankirtan* comes to a close, signalling the beginning of the *Rasa-lila*.

The *Rasa-lila* performances follow a predetermined traditional *kram* (order). Of the four main *Rasa-lilas*, the *Vasanta-rasa* has the most comprehensive and clear five-part structure. This structure is as follows:

first part: entrance, invocation, prayer;
second part: formation of the *rasa-mandala*;
third part: introductory dances by main characters;
fourth part: dramatic episode;
fifth part: closing rites—prayers and offerings.

In the *Maha-rasa*, the dramatic episode dominates and all the other parts are absorbed in it. The *Kunja-rasa*, on the other hand, has no dramatic episode and since it precedes the *Maha-rasa* it is often considered a prelude to it. The *Nitya-rasa* observes all five parts with very little emphasis on dramatic content. Instead, it shows games played in a competitive spirit by Krishna, Radha and the *gopis* (milkmaids).

A passage in an inspired work on Krishna *bhakti* suggests the deepening of devotion in gradual stages. As stated by Raihana Tyabji in her work, *The Heart of a Gopi*: "There is first, the hearing of the Name, followed by a curiosity that rapidly deepens into attraction. Then comes the contact with a true *bhakta* [devotee] and then a gradual and ever deepening sense of His presence, an intense desire for direct communion with Him. Whereupon the Soul turns into a *gopi*, sees Him and lives in Brindavan near His feet forever afterwards."

The *Sankirtan* prelude and the *Rasa-lila* performance show a very similar progression. The *Sankirtan* invokes Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the "true *bhakta*," and describes his desire to experience the *Rasa-lila*; the *bhakta* in the audience is privileged to witness it, to identify with a *gopi* and to serve Krishna in Brindavan. This results in a deeply emotional response from the audience. It is not rare to see tears flow down the faces of both men and women as they become absorbed in the performance. The ecstatic experience of the most ardent among them is reminiscent of the description of Prahlad as an "ideal *bhakta*" in the *Puranas*: "He is totally oblivious to the outside world, he weeps and laughs, sings hymns and dances and imitates Krishna's deeds" (Friedhelm Hardy, *Viraha-Bhakti*, p.41).

The profoundly devotional content of the *Rasa-lila* is conveyed mainly through dance and song. The dancers move slowly as though weighed down with emotion, while the voices of the singers are filled with *kampan* (tremors of pathos), often breaking with sudden emotion.

The form and structure of the performance facilitate its emotional content. The organic fusion of form and emotional content can be explored in the analysis of the *Rasa-lila*'s time, space and action. The relation of these elements to the ancient *mandala* symbol shows their unique cohesion into a holistic continuum bound by the form of a circle and *bhakti* or devotional content.

A definition providing a simple description of the *mandala* as a universal symbol is given below from *Mandala*, a work by Jose and Mariam Arguelles: "A *mandala* consists of a series of concentric forms, suggestive of a passage between different dimensions. In its essence, it pertains not only to the earth but to the macrocosm and microcosm, the largest

1a

1b

1. The *Vasanta-rasa* is performed on the full moon night of *Chaitra* in April. In this *Rasa-lila* Lord Krishna, Radha and her friends join to celebrate Holi (the spring festival of colours). Krishna gives his exclusive attention to Chandrabali by dancing with her. Radha resents this and leaves the *rasa-mandala*, casting away her blue veil which has been the symbol of her love for Krishna. The moment Krishna finds the veil, he becomes aware of Radha's anger and leaves Chandrabali in search of Radha. When he finds her, Radha refuses to see him. Krishna asks for forgiveness and wins her over. In the end all of them dance in rapture. Radha and the *gopi*s unwillingly return to their homes at the request of Krishna.
a. A sequence from the *Gopi-abhisara* in the Shri Shri-Govindaji temple. Photo: Pankaj Shah.
b. A sequence showing Holi on stage, depicting the sprinkling of colour. Artistes: the Jhaveri Sisters and troupe (Darshana as Krishna, Ranjana as Radha, Lalana and Suverna with Shantibala Devi as *sakhi*s [friends]). Photo: Suresh Seth.

structural processes as well as the smallest. It is a gatepost between the two . . . . Its basic principles are a center, symmetry and cardinal points . . . . Its traditional design often utilises the circle-symbol of the cosmos in its entirety and the square-symbol of the earth or the man-made world."

Circular Form

The most apparent form that recurs in every aspect of the *Rasa-lila* performance is the circle. A brief description of the *Rasa-lila*'s time, space and action reveals how the form of the circle in each aspect unites the performance into a series of continuous and interlocked concentric circles.

Circular Time

The annual recurrence of each performance in an unbroken time cycle since its first appearance in AD 1779, is analogous to the continuous revolutions of the earth around the sun. Likewise, the rotation of the earth on its axis is implied in the daily rituals of the worship of Krishna. The performance of the *Rasa-lila* is allotted the last period in the eight-part time division, known as the *ashtakal*, of Krishna's diurnal schedule. It begins at about 7.00 p.m. after the *sandhya-arati* (evening prayer) and ends early in the morning in time for the *mangala-arati* (morning prayer). According to John Sttraton in his work, *At Play With Krishna*, this shows that the *Rasa-lila* performance is an integral part of this daily cycle, and that "temple worship of Krishna and the *Rasa-lila* performance in the *rasa-mandapa* are two arenas of a single dramatic activity." The image of rotation is also emphasized by the duration of the performance which is related to the setting and the rising of the sun.

2

2. A performance of the *Kunja-rasa* in the Shri Shri-Govindaji temple. Performed on the full moon night of *Ashvin* in October, it depicts Krishna meeting Radha with her choicest companions in a *kunja* (bower) where they perform the *rasa*. The songs of this *Rasa-lila* describe the *sharada ritu* (autumn). The *Kunja-rasa* is actually a prologue to the *Maha-rasa*. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

3a

3b

3. The *Maha-rasa* is performed on the full moon night of *Kartik* in November. On this night, Lord Krishna, to fulfil his promise of performing the *Rasa-lila* with the *gopis*, reaches the appointed place. Charmed by the music of his flute, Radha and the *gopis* abandon their work and set out to meet him. The intensity of their love is satisfied only when they meet Lord Krishna and dance with him in joy. As soon as the *gopis* become conscious of their good fortune and are overcome with pride, Lord Krishna senses this and disappears with Radha. When Radha considers herself more fortunate than the *gopis*, Lord Krishna disappears from her as well. The *gopis* become restless and pray ardently to Krishna to appear before them. In their relentless search they woefully implore the trees, birds and animals to help them find their beloved. Instead, they find Radha, also weeping and wandering in search of her lord. This separation melts their pride and Lord Krishna appears again, not as one person but as many. There are as many Krishnas as there are *gopis* (*eka-gopi-eka-shyam*) and all of them dance in ecstasy, performing the *rasa*. At the end of the *rasa*, Krishna suggests to Radha and the *gopis* that they should return to their homes.
a. A performance in a *khulak* temple. Photo: Pankaj Shah.
b. The sequence of *eka-gopi-eka-shyam* on stage. Artistes: the Jhaveri Sisters and troupe. Photo: Subodh Chandra.

4a

4. The *Nitya-rasa* is performed at any time during the year, and takes place in *khulak* temples only. It lays more emphasis on technique than on dramatic content when compared with other *Rasa-lilas*. It focuses on a sequence of *pontha-jagoi* in which Radha and Krishna challenge each other to a competition of difficult *talas* and dance movements. If Krishna loses, he has to surrender his *mukuta* (crown). If Radha loses, she has to serve Krishna. The *gopis* also challenge Krishna to show his prowess.
a. A performance in a *khulak* temple. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

4b

4c

4b. A performance in a *khulak* temple. Photo: courtesy, Manipuri Nartanalaya.
4c. A performance on stage. Artistes: the Jhaveri Sisters and troupe. Photo: Suresh Seth.

5a

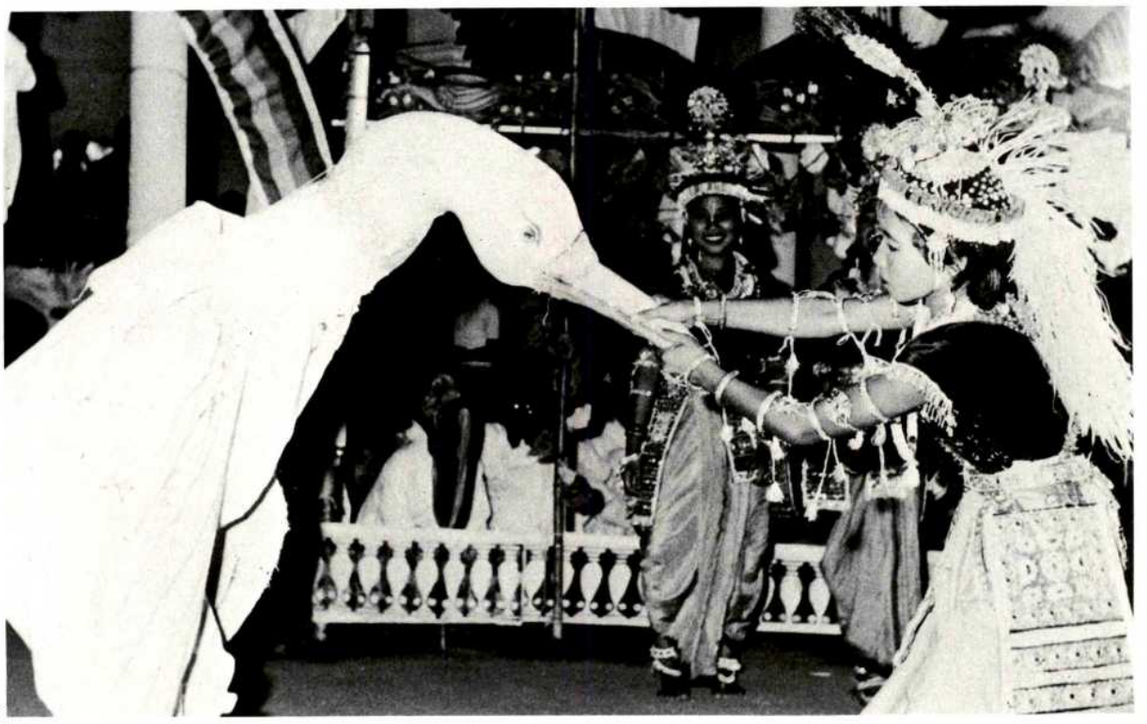
5b

5. The *Gopa-rasa* is performed on the eighth day (*gopashtami*) of the month of *Kartik* in November. This depicts the childhood pranks and valourous deeds of Krishna. In this *rasa*, Narada teaches Balarama and Krishna the tasks performed by the *gopalakas* (cowherds). At the request of the *gopalakas*, Nanda and Jashoda send Balarama and Krishna with them to tend the cows in the meadow at Brindavan. Balarama, Krishna and the *gopalakas* proceed with sticks in their hands to the meadow. They dance joyfully together and engage in playing *kanduka-krida* (a ball game). When they feel hungry, they go to a *tada-vana* (palm forest) where they shake the trees and eat the fallen fruits. Dhenukasura (the demon with the head of a wild bull), who dominates this *tada-vana*, angrily attempts to drive the *gopalakas* away. Balarama refuses to leave the *tada-vana*, and after a fight, overcomes and destroys Dhenukasura. Later, while the *gopalakas* are at play once again in Brindavan, they are challenged by Bakasura (a stork demon). Krishna answers the challenge, battles with the demon and destroys him. Then Balarama and Krishna return home.
a. A group of *gopalakas* in the Shri Shri-Govindaji temple. Photo: Pankaj Shah.
b. Narada bowing to Krishna and Balarama in the Shri Shri-Govindaji temple. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

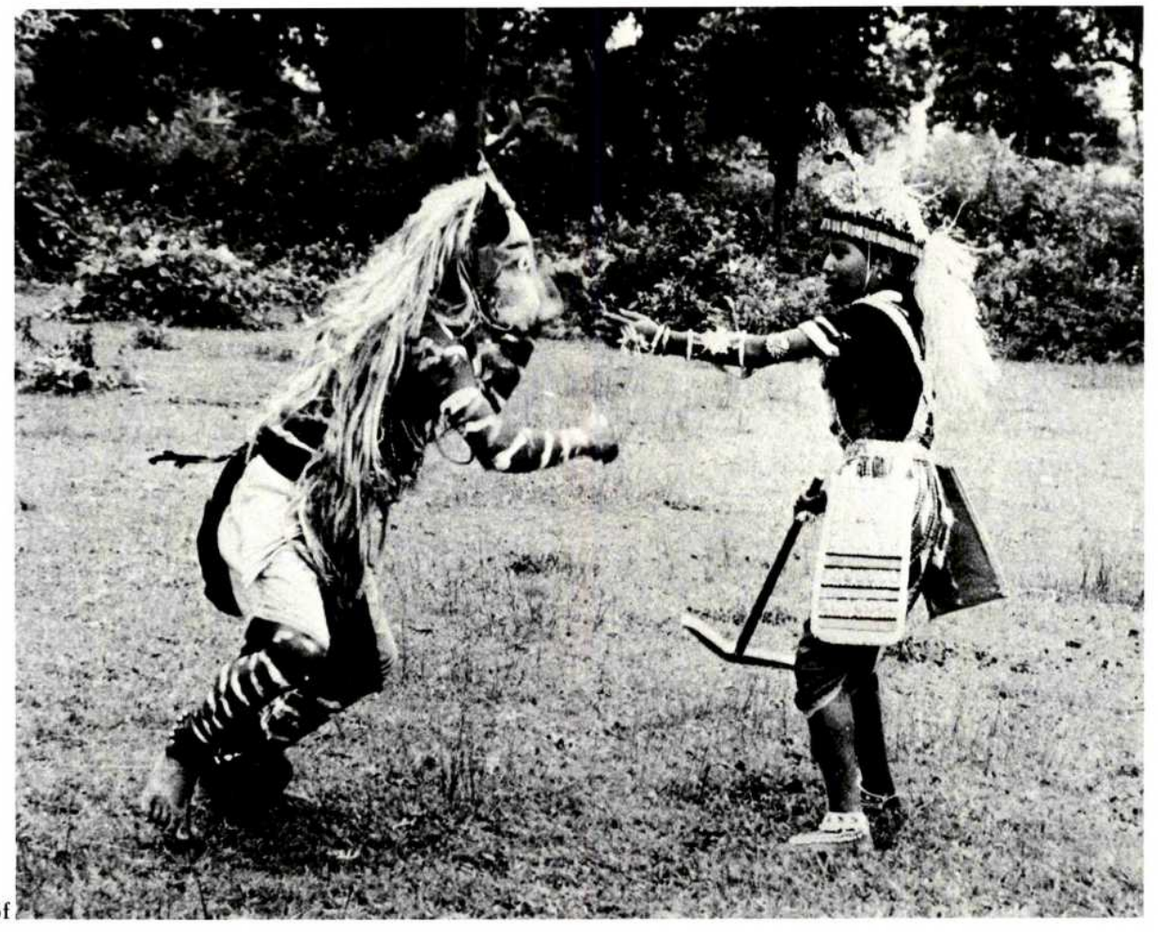
5c

5d

5c. *Gopalakas* seen dancing in the meadow. Photo: Pankaj Shah.
5d. The *Danda-rasa* (*gopalakas* dancing with sticks) on the stage. Artistes: Shantibala Devi, Darshana and Lalana Jhaveri. Photo: Suresh Seth.



5e

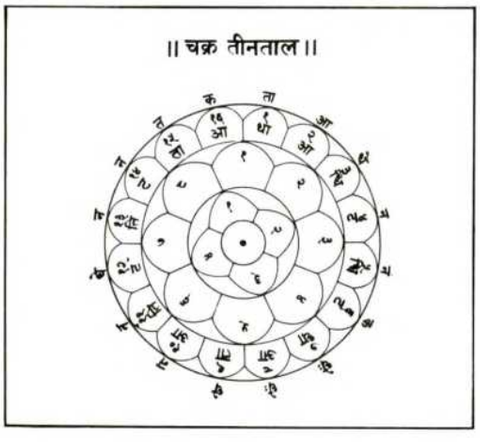


5f

5e. Krishna's encounter with Bakasura (a stork demon). Photo: courtesy, Manipuri Nartanalaya.
5f. Balarama's encounter with Dhenukasura (the demon with the head of a wild bull). Photo: courtesy, Manipuri Nartanalaya.

Except for the *raga* (melody of fixed notes) and *alapa* (the delineation of the basic notes of the melody) portions of the *Rasa-lila*, the entire performance is set to the cyclic beat system called *tala* (time measure). The most characteristic feature of this system is its arrangement of returning to the beginning. For instance, in a four-beat rhythm cycle, the beat pattern of a single phase would be 1-2-3-4-1. This is perhaps best illustrated by the *Sangita purusha mandala* in which the lotus diagram shows each phase emerging from and returning to the central point. The entire performance is therefore interlocked with a rhythmic chain of cyclic beat patterns emphasizing the *sama* (centre).

6



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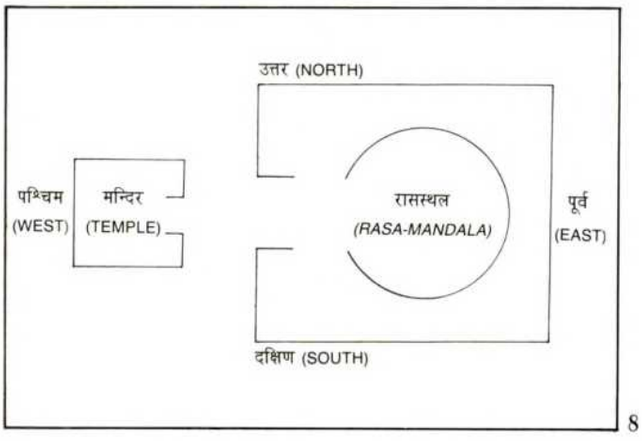

8

6. Infant Krishna tied to an *udukhal* (mortar). The *Udukhal-rasa* is a later addition to the Manipuri repertoire and can be performed at any time of the year. This *rasa* presents scenes of Krishna's birth, his killing of the demoness Putana and the demon Trinavarta, the stealing of butter and curds and the teasing of the *gopis*. The harassed *gopis* complain to Krishna's mother Jashoda who ties him to an *udukhal*. But Krishna escapes with the *udukhal* and frees himself by forcefully passing between two jamalarjun trees, thereby liberating the *asuras* who were cursed to assume the form of these trees. Photo: courtesy, Manipuri Nartanalaya.

7. The *Sangita purusha mandala*. Reproduced from: Kapila Vatsyayan, *The Square and the Circle of the Indian Arts* (New Delhi, 1983), chart G.

8. Plan of the temple and the *rasa-mandala*. Reproduced from: Darshana Jhaveri, *Manipuri Nartan* (Varanasi, 1978), p. 41.

Circular Space

The *rasa-mandapa* of the Shri Shri-Govindaji temple is a twelve-pillared pavilion covered with a sheet metal roof. The audience is seated outside the pillared square and the performance takes place inside. The main area of the performance is a circle demarcated with potted plants. Its central point consists of a wooden dais called the *bhadra-chakra* (lotus wheel) or *kama-chakra* (wheel of love) meant for the installation of the images of Krishna and Radha. It is the focal point of the performance and the point from which the performers and the audience obtain their orientation. Thus, throughout the performance, the performers face the images of the deities, with their backs to the audience. In a *khulak* temple, the images of Radha and Krishna are personified by child artistes who also dance throughout the performance.

The circular area for the performance is within the pillared square with four gates considered accessible and facing the four cardinal directions, north, south, east and west. The images of Krishna and Radha are lifted in from the gate facing eastwards. The *gopi*s also enter here. The gate facing west, is for the devotees to enter and make their offerings. The *arangpham* (brahmin in charge of the *mandapa*) uses the gate facing north while the *karigar* is assigned the gate facing south. The circular area in conjunction with the square, its four gates in the cardinal directions and the deities at the focal centre correspond fully with the ancient *mandala* that is a construct signifying microcosmic and macrocosmic dimensions.

Circular Action

Viewing the mystical beauty of the *Rasa-lila* in the *rasa-mandapa* of the Shri Shri-Govindaji temple, one transcends physical reality. Images of luminous bodies rotating and revolving around a blazing centre, like the planets around the sun, appear in the mind's eye as the *gopi*s dressed in cylindrical skirts of red satin and sequins dance in *bhramari*s (spins) around Krishna and Radha. The Manipuri word for dance is *jagoi*. It means to turn around or spin. This shows that circular movement is fundamental to Manipuri dance, which is the main means of expressing the dramatic emotions of the *Rasa-lila*.

The *gopi*s enter the *rasa-mandapa* in a dance called the *Gopi-abhisara*, and after the initial offering of praise to the images of Krishna and Radha, they form the *mandali* (circle) around the deities which becomes the major choreographic pattern for the rest of the performance. The *Rasa-lila* is, therefore, a mystical *mandala* in motion, giving this geometrical construct the divine life force that it signifies.

The relationship between circular form and expression of the divine is the fundamental content of the *Rasa-lila* and is reflected in the following passage by Henri-Charles Puech in *Quantum Soup* compiled by Al Chung-Liang: "The circular movement which assures the survival of the same things by repeating them, by bringing about their continuous return, is the perfect and most immediate expression (hence that which is closest to the divine) . . . ."

It is remarkable how beautifully the *mandala* structure of the *Rasa-lila* performance serves its divine purpose. It works first to purify and then to intensify sensory experience. It enhances and attunes response to the aesthetic and divine bliss (*rasananda*), the experience of which is like a sweet essence that flavours and then explodes, its sweetness overpowering. It is no wonder that the *bhaktas* in the audience shed tears of profound joy.

◇

Technique
the choreographic content

Ranjana Jhaveri and Darshana Jhaveri

Dance is the conscious expression of man's inborn instinct for rhythm. In the arts, emotions precede logic. All creative impulses begin as a spontaneous expression and they evolve into conscious and sophisticated art-forms. But though the creative impulse remains a mystery, its result in art is not. Man soon begins to speculate about what he has created. And the moment he begins to contemplate on the nature and value of art, he begins to classify and theorize, regulate and systematize. Thus he evolves what is called technique or science. Technique is merely the means to preserve and perpetuate a living art.

As dance is the expression of an emotion through rhythmic body movement, by conscious and ordered manipulation in time and space, it cannot be strictly defined in terms of words—it has to be experienced directly. Being three-dimensional, dance is perhaps the only art which has the capacity to incorporate the essential elements of all the other sister arts and to become a complete, integrated and unified experience.

The nature of Manipuri dancing is traditional, classical and scientific. The analysis and classification of its various movements and forms faithfully adhere to the basic laws of anatomy, psychology and aesthetics. The technical data of Manipuri dance and music correspond to the different manuscripts available in Manipur, particularly the *Govinda-sangita-lila-vilasa, Shrikrishna-rasa-sangita-sangraha, Mridanga-sangraha, Mridanga-vyavastha-sangita* as well as various Vaishnavite treatises such as the *Govinda-lilamritam, Sangita-damodar, Bhakti-ratnakara, Sangita-sara-sangraha, Gita-chandrodaya, Krishnabhavanamritam* and *Anandavrindavana-champu.*

The distinguishing trait in Manipuri dance lies in its expression entirely through body movements. Harmony and balance in the movements are achieved by avoiding emphasis on any one part of the body. It is a style which is imbued with delicate lyricism and fluid grace. Its rich and exotic patterns create a unique blend of spirited elation and serenity.

As regards discipline, Manipuri dancing requires long and intense training, immense patience and hard work on the part of a dancer in order to master the intricacies, complexities and subtleties of the seemingly easy movements. Apart from needing the ability to project the innate sensibilities of the dance form, the performer requires a highly developed skill to express the aesthetic and idealized dance patterns. The essentially decorative character of Manipuri dance does not preclude it from having immense interpretative resources. As man's response to the nuances of the inner life, its profundity is unchallengable.

In Manipur, *jagoi* (dance), known also by its Sanskrit name *nartana,* is divided into three main aspects. The *punglol-jagoi* (dance on rhythm patterns) is a pure and abstract dance in which body movements express decorative and ornamental patterns. This is the equivalent of *nritta* in classical Indian dance. *Mottauba* (interpretative dance) represents the *nritya* aspect of classical Indian dance. Through body movements and gestures the

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dance translates the meaning of the song. *Lila* (the interpretation of a theme through histrionic representation) resembles *natya* in classical Indian dance where all the four elements of *abhinaya* (histrionic representation) are utilized to communicate the theme of the drama being enacted.

The dances are either *nupi-jagoi* (feminine), equivalent to the *lasya* form of Indian classical dance, or *nipa-jagoi* (masculine), equivalent to the *tandava* form of Indian classical dance. Though the *lasya* (delicate and graceful) *sukumara* (*naubathotpa* in Manipuri) and the *tandava* (forceful and virile) *uddhata* (*akanba* in Manipuri) are counterparts of each other, each is independently and distinctly developed into a variety of forms which are fundamentally guided by the anatomical, psychological and aesthetic individuality of the dancer.

In the *nupi-jagoi*, the positions and movements of the body faithfully observe definite principles and disciplines. The body must remain natural, soft and supple. Exaggeration is not permitted in any of the movements, nor is any part of the body allowed to stretch to its extreme possibility. The movements must be rounded and continuous. Each complete movement should flow into the next, like the waves of the sea.

While dancing the *nupi-jagoi*, the performer ensures that the feet and knees remain as close to each other as possible. The hips are moved vertically rather than horizontally. The torso also moves upwards and downwards, bending only slightly to the sides. The positions and movements of the hands do not go above the head or below the knees. They are executed diagonally, that is to say, always at an angle of forty-five degrees. The eyes follow the movements of the hands, hence the neck and the head also move diagonally and follow the swing of the body.

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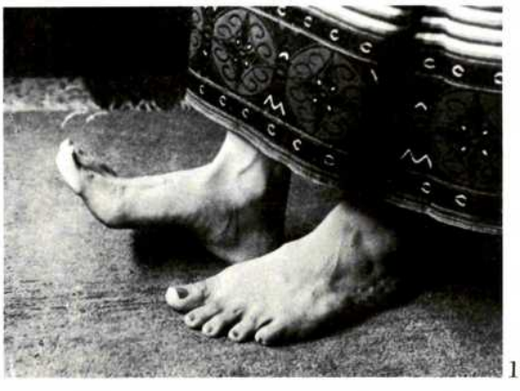

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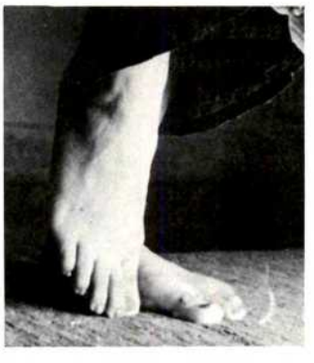

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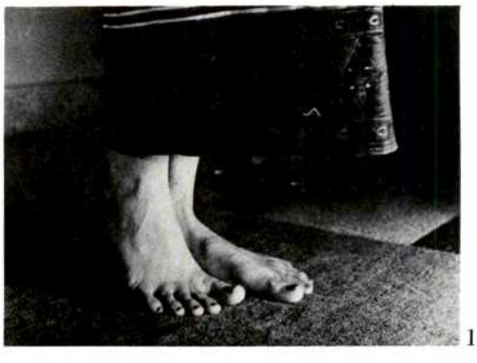


1e

1. *Khongtha* (*pada bheda* in Sanskrit), the positions of the feet.
Photos: courtesy, the Jhaveri Sisters:
a. *Sama,* both feet flat and close to each other.
b. *Anchita,* resting one foot on the heel.
c. *Kunchita,* resting one foot on the back of the toes.
d. *Suchi,* resting one foot on the big toe.
e. *Agratalasanchara,* resting one foot on all the toes.

2b

2d

2a-d. *Aphambi* (*upavishta-bheda* in Sanskrit), squatting poses. Artiste: Darshana Jhaveri. Photos: Pankaj Shah.

3a

3b

3a-c. *Areibi* (*bhramari-bheda* in Sanskrit), spiral movements in *lasya.* Artiste: Darshana Jhaveri. Photos: Pankaj Shah.

4c

4. *Areibi* (*bhramari-bheda* in Sanskrit), spiral movements in *tandava.* Photos: Pankaj Shah.
a-c. *Uplei,* a left spiral—one complete movement. Artiste: Priti Patel.

The *nupi-jagoi* is divided into two aspects: *simitangam*, where the movements are flowing but restrained stressing the importance of poise and balance and where the tempo is slow; and *sphuritangam*, where the movements are free, the rhythm patterns intricate and complex, and the tempo medium-fast.

The *nipa-jagoi* is divided into three aspects. *Gunthanam* is a masculine counterpart of the *lasya* type, except the movements are freer and slightly exaggerated. It involves sitting and jumping movements while keeping the feet and the knees as close as possible. These movements are known as *prerani* (softer movements) as opposed to *bahurup* (forceful movements). *Chalanam* signifies movements in which the feet and knees are kept apart. The foot moves upwards from the ground as high as the calf, the knee or the thigh. The movements are mostly upwards and downwards. Included in this type of *tandava* are also a variety of sitting, jumping and spiral movements. In *prasaranam*, the movements are free, exaggerated and stretched to the farthest limit.

One of the most important traditional and basic dance compositions in the *tandava* as well as in the *lasya* forms is the *chali*. It reveals the essence of the Manipuri dance style. It is composed in a *tala* (time measure) of eight *matras* (beats) known as *Tintal-mel* (*trimelaka*) in medium tempo. It is performed diagonally revealing the innate beauty of a short but significant composition. It also serves as a fitting epilogue to the five *bhangi-parengs* (series of body flexions) and also all the dance compositions related to important characters such as Krishna, Radha and Brinda. Dance training in Manipur begins with the *chali*.

4e

4d. Jumping and turning around with left leg crossing to right before arriving at the sitting posture. Artiste: Sruti Banerjee.

4e. *Bagleiba*, turning around with the two knees touching the ground alternately. Artiste: Sruti Banerjee.

5. *Chali,* a traditional dance composition, with movements accompanied by the following syllables of the drum. Artiste: Ranjana Jhaveri. Photos: Marjadi.
a. *dhin-ten-s-ta (khi-ta-dhen-ta).*
b. *ta-ten-ta-ta (khit-ta-dhen-ta).*

5a

5b

6a

6b

6. *Phirep* (*sthanaka* in Sanskrit), the basic standing postures. Artiste: Darshana Jhaveri. Photos: courtesy, Rajdatt Arts.
a. *Samabhanga,* standing straight with *samapada.*
b. *Abhanga,* with one flexion towards the left.

5c. *dhin-ten-khra-khra (ta-dha-dhen-ta).*
5d. *ta-ghina-gara-dhei.*
5e. *ghina-gara-dhen-ta.*

5c

5d

5e

6c

6d

6c. *Tribhanga,* with flexions at neck, waist and hip.
6d. *Vibhanga,* with a slight forward body bend and one knee protruding.

7a

7. The *bhangi-pareng*.
a. A movement from the *Khurumba-bhangi-pareng* in *lasya* style. Artiste: Nayana Jhaveri. Photo: courtesy, Rajdatt Arts.

7b. A movement from the *Brindavan-bhangi-pareng* in *lasya* style. Artistes: the Jhaveri Sisters (left to right: Nayana, Ranjana, Darshana, Suverna). Photo: Dhiraj Chawda.

7b

7d

7c. A movement from the *Achouba-bhangi-pareng* in *lasya* style. Artiste: Guneshwari Devi. Photo: Pankaj Shah.
7d. A movement from the *Goshtha-bhangi-pareng* in *tandava* style. Artiste: Vinodini Devi. Photo: courtesy, the Jhaveri Sisters.
7e. A movement from the *Goshtha-brindavan-bhangi-pareng* in *tandava* style. Artiste: Vinodini Devi. Photo: courtesy, the Jhaveri Sisters.

8a

8

8. *Khutthek* (*Nrittahasta-kriya* in Sanskrit), hand gestures in pure dance.
Artiste: Suverna Jhaveri. Photos: Marjadi.
a. *Champra-hekpi.*
b. *Champra-aukpi.*
c. *Khujengleibi.*

8d

8d. *Lasingkakpi.*

Bhangi-parengs or *bhangavalis* involve different *bhangas* (body flexions) such as *abhanga, samabhanga, tribhanga* and *vibhanga* which are connected by *gatibhangas* (the body movements composed on a determined time measure and rhythm flowing from one *bhanga* to another). There are five *bhangi-parengs*—three of the *lasya* variety and two of the *tandava* variety. These are traditional dance compositions, each articulating a series of basic body movements (a vocabulary of movement arrangement) incorporating all the important variations of the different parts of the body and representing fundamental and universal principles of the Manipuri dance technique. The *bhangi-parengs* are performed in a circle with Krishna in the centre. The form adheres strictly to the *hallisaka* (a dance in which female dancers surround a male dancer) described in Vaishnavite texts like the *Govinda-lilamritam, Anandavrindavana-champu, Gitavali* and *Padyavali.*

Lasya bhangi-parengs form a subgroup of the *simitangam* style. They consist of the *Achouba-bhangi-pareng* and its two variations—the *Brindavan-bhangi-pareng* and the *Khurumba-bhangi-pareng.* The *Achouba-bhangi-pareng* and the *Khurumba-bhangi-pareng* both start with *tala Rajamel* of seven beats. The *Brindavan-bhangi-pareng,*

9a

9. *Mithobandha,* formations while holding hands. Photos: Pankaj Shah.
a. Artistes: Priti Patel and Kalavati Devi.

however, starts with *tala Tintal-achouba* of eight beats. Both *tala Rajamel* and *tala Tintal-achouba* are followed by *tala Tanchep* of four beats and *Menkup* of three beats ending with the *chali.* The rhythm of these compositions is *vilambit* (slow).

The *tandava bhangi-parengs* belong to the *gunthanam* aspect. This subgroup comprises the *Goshtha-bhangi-pareng* and its variation, the *Goshtha-brindavan-bhangi-pareng.* The *Goshtha-bhangi-pareng* starts with *tala Rajamel* of seven beats, while its variation, the *Goshtha-brindavan-pareng*, starts with *tala Tintal-achouba* of eight beats. Both of these *talas* are followed by *tala Tanchep* of four beats and *tala Menkup* of three beats, ending with the *chali.* The rhythm of these compositions is medium. The *chali* and the *bhangi-parengs* serve not only as the alphabet of the Manipuri dance lexicon but also offer an insight into the true form and spirit of Manipuri dancing.

The *punglol-jagoi,* also known as *nrittabandha* in Sanskrit, is a dance composed on rhythm patterns. This dance is closely interwoven with Manipuri music. The rich variety of *talas* and their intricate play in diverse *layas* (rhythm and rhythm patterns) created by the *mridanga* (drum), represent "the dance." The dance movements follow the stress and rhythm of the arrangements of the syllables of the drum. The *lasya* form is

9b

9b. Artistes: Darshana Jhaveri and Sruti Banerjee.

rendered in the *sphuritangam* aspect and the *tandava* form in the *gunthanam* aspect.

Although the *talas* have a traditional framework, the individual geniuses of the Manipuri gurus constantly innovate, within the prescribed framework, new time variations and intricate rhythm patterns, and devise dance compositions to suit them. This has not only contributed towards the formulation of a rich storehouse of *talas* but has also prompted creative artistes to invent new steps and body movements without adulterating the purity of the dance style.

The dance composed on the *alankar-punglol* (a rhythm pattern) is called *nritta-alankar,* and the *pareng* (series of *nritta-alankars*) is known by the name of the *tala.* For example, if the *nritta-alankars* are on *tala Chartal* of fourteen beats and four stresses, they are known as *Chartal-pareng.*

The *punglol-jagoi* composed on a *prabandha* (musical composition having different combinations of two or more from six elements) is called *nritta-prabandha.* Some of the important *nritta-prabandhas* are:

Telena or *tallina*: a dance based on word arrangements suggested by the beats of the drum, such as *dim-tom-dere-tana,* sung in a particular melody, composed on any *tala.* In Manipur, such word arrangements are numerous.

Swaramala: a dance based on complicated arrangements of *swaras* (musical notes) in which the notes are sung in a particular melody composed on any *tala.*

Chaturanga: a dance composition based on a combination of the elements of music such as *pada* (poetry), *swara, nirgita* (particular types of syllables) and *tala.*

Kirti-prabandha: a composition created in praise of a *nayaka* (hero) or a *nayika* (heroine) incorporating *pada, nirgita* and *tala,* which does not seek to interpret the meaning of the song or poem but is inspired by its rhythm patterns. The poetry is either sung or the verses are spoken in rhythm.

Dancing, the body being its medium, is an extremely difficult art. Apart from innate artistic sensibilities, it requires a highly developed skill and the demands made on a dancer for accuracy in detail are uncompromising. Dance is a considerably exacting medium which expresses aesthetic and idealized patterns through the human body which is usually so static and rigid.

The study of a technique, the establishment of the correlation between existing art-forms and the available knowledge of dancing, and understanding the spirit of a classical and traditional art, is not the end but the beginning for a creative dancer.

A traditional dancer must be conscious of the technical problems as well as the artistic responsibilities involved in the art of dancing. Technique or tradition should not mean a mere exposition or repetition of dance sequences but a significant creative transformation of art in terms of fresh impulses. New dance compositions and choreography must be continuously created to suit the numerous demands of the modern stage without impairing the technical form and the traditional spirit of the dance.

Dance as a form of self-expression and communication can blossom only if the audience is critical and cultivated. The process of dance is complete only when communication is achieved. Says the commentator Dhananjaya: "The audience must bring to the theatre as much imagination as the actors."

◇

Abhinaya
the aesthetics of expression

Guru Bipin Singh and Kalavati Devi

Every nuance of the emotional experience of a human being is rendered by the dancer through *abhinaya* (histrionic representation). *Abhinaya* can be described as an act of communicating an idealized state of emotions by means of facial expressions, body movements and hand gestures. In Indian aesthetics, sentiments are defined as *rasas* and are exhaustively classified into nine categories and their subdivisions. Each *rasa* is divided into two main types: *vibhava* (determination) and *anubhava* (consequence). These, in turn, are further subdivided into three kinds: *sathi* (dominant), *vyabhichari* (transitory) and *satvika* (temperamental). The *shastras*—ancient Indian texts—have delineated in detail the principle and methodology of expressing and interpreting the subtle variations of each subdivision in order to evoke the *rasa.*

There are four aspects of *abhinaya: angika, vachika, aharya* and *satvika.* The first, the *angikabhinaya,* expresses the emotional state of the dancer by means of gestures, postures and movements of each part of the body while the second, the *vachikabhinaya,* relies on the use of words, poems, songs or music. The *aharyabhinaya* deals with costumes, ornaments, make-up and decor, and the *satvikabhinaya* with the understanding and the interpretation of various states of being connected with the sentiments.

The *Rasa-lila* performances of Manipur employ elements of dance, music and drama with the appropriate use of the four types of *abhinaya* described above. These four types of *abhinaya* can be expressed in three different ways:

Svanugata: the body movements here are performed independently. Even when the body movements are complemented with songs, they do not seek to interpret the exact meaning of the songs. This form is suitable for depicting Krishna playing *kanduka-krida* (a ball game) or participating in *Holika-krida* (playing with colours).

Anugata: in this, the content of the verse is important and the body movements are evolved to interpret the meaning of each word of the song.

Gamaka: here, the content of the verse is important, with the body movements only suggesting the meaning of the song.

In Manipur, *abhinaya* is mainly done in the *gamaka* way in which the act of expressing is termed *mottauba.*

Before the advent of Vaishnavism in Manipur, there was an ancient religious tradition of worshipping local deities, such as those of the forest and ancestral gods and goddesses, in the festival of *Lai-haraoba.* In this, the *maibis* (high priestesses, both male and female according to the Manipuri tradition) describe the primitive concept of cosmology through the use of hand gestures. Thus the use of *hastas* (hand gestures) is an established tradition. This is the root of *abhinaya* in the Vaishnavite dances of Manipur. The *hastas* are generally neither literally nor elaborately implemented but remain suggestive. However, as and when required, they are used in a realistic manner.

With the expansion of Vaishnavism in Manipur, various texts appeared which described and codified the gestures of the different parts of the body—the *anga,* the

pratyanga and the *upanga*—with particular significance attached to each one of them. The accompanying facial expressions are subtle, subdued and natural. Sometimes the dancer uses movements of the entire body to convey a subject, such as the flow of a river, the gait of an elephant or the glide of a swan.

Several Vaishnavite texts describe the hand gestures and body movements to be used in dances (see Appendix 1). For example, the *Govinda-lilamritam* (Chapter XXIII, *shloka* 24) states: "*Gopis* are in ecstasy while watching Krishna sing—expressing the meaning of the song through hand gestures and facial expressions—and dance in the appropriate *tala* with swaying movements of the neck and waist, prankish eye movements and body movements sideways, forwards and backwards." This text also mentions the twelve *asanyuta hastas* (single hand gestures) and refers to the *viprayukta hastas* (where both hands are used, but not in a combined manner). The *Anandavrindavana-champu* (Chapter XX, *shloka* 19) mentions both *asanyuta* and *sanyuta hastas* (where the two hands are combined). The *Bhakti-ratnakara* (Chapter V, *shlokas* 3179 and 3249) gives a description of the *abhinaya* and technique in the *Rasa-lila*, as well as of the *asanyuta* and *sanyuta hastas*. The *Krishna-rasa-sangita-sangraha* (*shlokas* 628-639) mentions thirty types of *nritta hastas* (hand gestures in pure dance), while the *Govinda-sangita-lila-vilasa*, an important Manipuri manuscript, provides the description of *anga*, *pratyanga* and *upanga*. It also elaborates the different types of *hastas*. Many of them are found also in Kulachandra Singh's *Meitei Lai-Haraoba* and in *Meitei-Jagoi-Khuthek* by H. Thambal Sharma.

Being sensitive to the arts of music and dance, Manipur readily adopted Gaudiya Vaishnavism, the Radha-Krishna *bhakti* (devotion) cult as advocated by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu of Bengal. Hence Vaishnavite religious themes—particularly those affiliated to the lives of Radha and Krishna—pervade most festivals connected with social and religious occasions.

Manipuri dancing has been enriched by the poetry and music of Vaishnavite devotional poets such as Jayadev, Vidyapati, Chandidas, Gyandas and Narottamdas, among others. The Vaishnavite religion emphasizes the philosophy of universal love through the emulation of the love between the legendary Radha and Krishna. Not surprisingly, the *Shringara-rasa* (the sentiment of love) predominates in the dances connected with the Radha-Krishna cult. All the important dance-dramas centre around incidents that occurred between Krishna and the *gopis* of Braj, particularly Radha. Whenever the devotees express their *bhakti* through the *Shringara-rasa* in the *Rasa-lila*, it is classified as *Madhura-bhakti*. The sentiment of love, *Shringara*, has two main aspects: *vipralambha* (*viyoga*—separation) and *sambhoga* (*milan*—union); between these two extremes there is a whole range of emotional nuances which have been described and classified by the Vaishnava scholars. Texts such as the *Ujjvala-nilamani*, *Rasa-humphumari* and *Rasa-manjari* have elaborated the two main accepted divisions of *vipralambha* and *sambhoga* into sixty-four variations (see Appendices 2, 3).

The *Ujjvala-nilamani* and the *Nayika-ratnamala* have also expanded the accepted *ashta-nayika* or *nayika-bheda*—eight states of emotions as experienced and expressed by the *nayika* (heroine)—into sixty-four subdivisions (see Appendix 4).

The sixty-four subdivisions of *nayika-bheda* are presented in a performance known as *Bashak* (derived from the *nayika Bashaka-sajja*) where women sing while dancing. The term *Bashaka-phangnaba* is applied to the *Sankirtan* where men compete while singing the sixty-four subdivisions of *nayika-bheda*. When the men compete while singing the sixty-four divisions of the *Shringara-rasa*, the performance is known as a *Rasa-phangnaba*.

Any dance composition in the above subdivisions employing one or more of the four aspects of *abhinaya* in the *svanugata*, *anugata* or *gamaka* manner is recognized as *nrityabandha*. In the *Rasa-lila* and *Bashak*, when only one dancer performs, it is referred to as *naitom*; and when two dancers compete with each other during a performance, it is known as *tombang*.

1. *Kanduka-krida*. Krishna and a *gopalaka* (cowherd) playing with a ball. Artistes: Sruti Banerjee and Priti Patel. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

Over and above a knowledge of the textual tradition of dance, the performer is expected to have the psychological understanding for sensitively interpreting and expressing the exact state of the *rasa.*

Manipuri dance includes all the compositions of any refined presentation, such as solos, duets, pantomimes, operettas, operas, dances, dramas and ballets. In each case, the nature of the presentation reflects the ethos of the Manipuri people.

APPENDIX 1

*HASTA*S AND THEIR USES

*ASANYUTA HASTA*S

1. *Pataka:* to strike, to deny, to smother, to defend, to play the drum, to level, to roll; a letter, long hair, wall, fan, scripture, peacock-feathered crown
2. *Tripataka:* to put a mark on the forehead, to comb, to close one's ears; flame, tears
3. *Ardhapataka:* depicts similarity; axe, mountain top
4. *Khatakamukha:* to show diamond earrings, to churn, to tie, to thresh, to weave; arrow, garland

2. The *Rasa-lila.* A *gopi* describing Krishna's garland. Artiste: Suverna Jhaveri. Photo: courtesy, the Jhaveri Sisters.

5. *Samdamsha:* to paint, to pluck, to indicate the colour and any part of the body, to play the flute; beautiful; necklace, soul
6. *Mrigashirsha:* deer, head of an elephant, animal
7. *Hansasya:* to spin, to speak, to sprinkle, to collect flowers; soft; head of a swan
8. *Alapallava:* to ask, to show physical beauty; fully blossomed lotus
9. *Bhrunga:* to hold the stem of a flower; bee, earrings
10. *Ankusha:* to control; nectar, an instrument, elephant, blessings
11. *Ardhachandra:* to show different parts of the body, shaking the trunk, to make a bun, to hold a child; neck, half moon, face, rays of the sun, neck of the pot, flow of a river
12. *Koraka:* kiss, bud, mouthful, woman, offering, banana-flowers
13. *Mushthi:* to hold a spear, sword or stick, to show pain, to squeeze, to hit; hair, fate
14. *Ankura:* to play the vina, to milk a cow, to play cymbals, to swing; little, sprout; pen
15. *Shardulashaya:* to tear; ball, claws of a tiger
16. *Kangula:* to eat, to hold a child's chin; small fruit, fireplace
17. *Trishula:* trident, three worlds, Shiva
18. *Kartarimukha:* to indicate an object at a distance, to go away, to apply red colour to the feet; mark on forehead, eyes, winding path, lightning, cot, love
19. *Suchimukha:* to apply collyrium, to indicate, to think, to mark an area; emaciated, similar; stick, bracelet, smile, pillar, budding plant
20. *Padmakosha:* half-blossomed flower, bunch of flowers, branch bent by flowers
21. *Shikhara:* to hold a bow, to drink, to churn; steadfast; Shivalinga, bell, teeth of a demon
22. *Hansapaksha:* to wait, to look, to hear, to wear an armlet, to embrace; one over the other, far off; bashfulness, forehead, wings, height
23. *Ahitunda:* holding water; offering, snake, pigmy
24. *Chatura:* to receive, to surrender; ceremonial lamp, measure
25. *Dhenu:* to indicate nearness, to throw dice, to play the vina, to speak softly, to walk; cow

SANYUTA HASTAS
1. *Shankha:* conch, throat
2. *Chakra:* wheel
3. *Anjali:* salutation (*namaskar*)
4. *Tarkshya:* eagle, love
5. *Pasha:* betrayed; quarrel, love, chain, bondage
6. *Karkata:* hut, sadness, anxiety
7. *Samputa:* to close, to squeeze; sorrow
8. *Kokila:* cuckoo, trembling heart
9. *Swastika:* feeling cold; symbol over the forest deity's temple
10. *Rambhasuma:* to accept graciously; pointed top of the temple, covered thing
11. *Pushpaputa:* to hold flowers or fruits, to beg, to invoke; offering
12. *Shuka:* bird

APPENDIX 2

SHRINGARA-RASA (SENTIMENT OF LOVE)

VIPRALAMBHA

1. *PURVARAGA* into 8 types	2. *MANA* into 8 types	3. *PRAVASA* into 8 types	4. *PREMAVAICHITYA* into 8 types
Sakshat-darshana	*Sakhimukha-shravana*	*Kaliya-damana*	*Krishna-prati-Akshepa*
Chitrapata-darshana	*Shukamukha-shravana*	*Gocharana*	*Murli-prati-Akshepa*
Swapna-darshana	*Murlidhwani-shravana*	*Nanda-mokshana*	*Nija-prati-Akshepa*
Bandhimukha-shravana	*Priyagatra-bhoganka*	*Karyanurodha*	*Sakhi-prati-Akshepa*
Dutimukha-shravana	*Vipakshagatra-bhoganka*	*Antardhana*	*Duti-prati-Akshepa*
Sakhimukha-shravana	*Gotra-skhalana*	*Bhavi-pravasa*	*Vidhata-prati-Akshepa*
Sangita-shravana	*Swapna-darshana*	*Mathura-gamana*	*Kandarpa-prati-Akshepa*
Bamshi-dhvani	*Anyanayika-darshanadi-hetu*	*Dwarika-gamana*	*Gurujanadi-prati-Akshepa*

APPENDIX 3

SAMBHOGA

1. *SANKSHIPTA* into 8 types	2. *SANKIRNA* into 8 types	3. *SAMPANNA* into 8 types	4. *SAMRIDHIMAN* into 8 types
Balya-milana	*Maha-rasa*	*Sudura-darshana*	*Swapna-vilasa*
Goshtha-milana	*Jala-keli*	*Jhulan*	*Kurukshetra-milana*
Godohan-milana	*Kunja-lila*	*Holi*	*Bhavollasa*
Akasmat-chumbana	*Dana-lila*	*Prahelika*	*Braja-gamana*
Hastakarshana	*Bansi-churi*	*Pasha-khela*	*Viparita-sambhoga*
Vastrakarshana	*Navakhela*	*Nartaka-rasa*	*Bhojana-kautuka*
Vartma-rodha	*Madhu-pana*	*Rasalasa*	*Ekatra-nidra*
Rati-bhoga	*Surya-puja*	*Kapata-nidra*	*Swadhina-bhartrika*

APPENDIX 4

NAYIKA-BHEDA INTO 8 TYPES

1. *ABHISARIKA* into 8 types	2. *BASHAKA-SAJJA* into 8 types	3. *UTKANTHIJA* into 8 types	4. *VIPRALABDHA* into 8 types
Jyotsana	*Mohini*	*Durmati*	*Vikala*
Tamasa	*Jagritika*	*Vikala*	*Premamata*
Varsha	*Rodita*	*Stabdha*	*Sanlesha*
Diwa	*Madyoktika*	*Ucchakita*	*Vinita*
Kujjhatika	*Suptika*	*Achetana*	*Nirdaya*
Tirthayatra	*Chakita*	*Sukhotkanthita*	*Prakhara*
Unmatta	*Surasa*	*Mukhara*	*Dutyadara*
Asamanjasa	*Uddesha*	*Nirbandha*	*Bhita*

5. *KHANDITA* into 8 types	6. *KALAHANTARITA* into 8 types	7. *PROSHITA BHARTRIKA* into 8 types	8. *SWADHINA BHARTRIKA* into 8 types
Ninda	*Agraha*	*Bhavi*	*Kopana*
Krodha	*Kshubdha*	*Bhavana*	*Manini*
Bhayanaka	*Dhira*	*Bhuta*	*Mugdha*
Pragalbha	*Adhira*	*Dashadasha*	*Madhya*
Madhya	*Kupita*	*Dutasamvada*	*Samyutkika*
Mugdha	*Sama*	*Vilapa*	*Sollasa*
Kampita	*Mridhula*	*Sakhyuktika*	*Anukula*
Santapta	*Vidura*	*Bhavollasa*	*Abhishikta*

◇

Exhibition Previews

Romance of the Taj Mahal

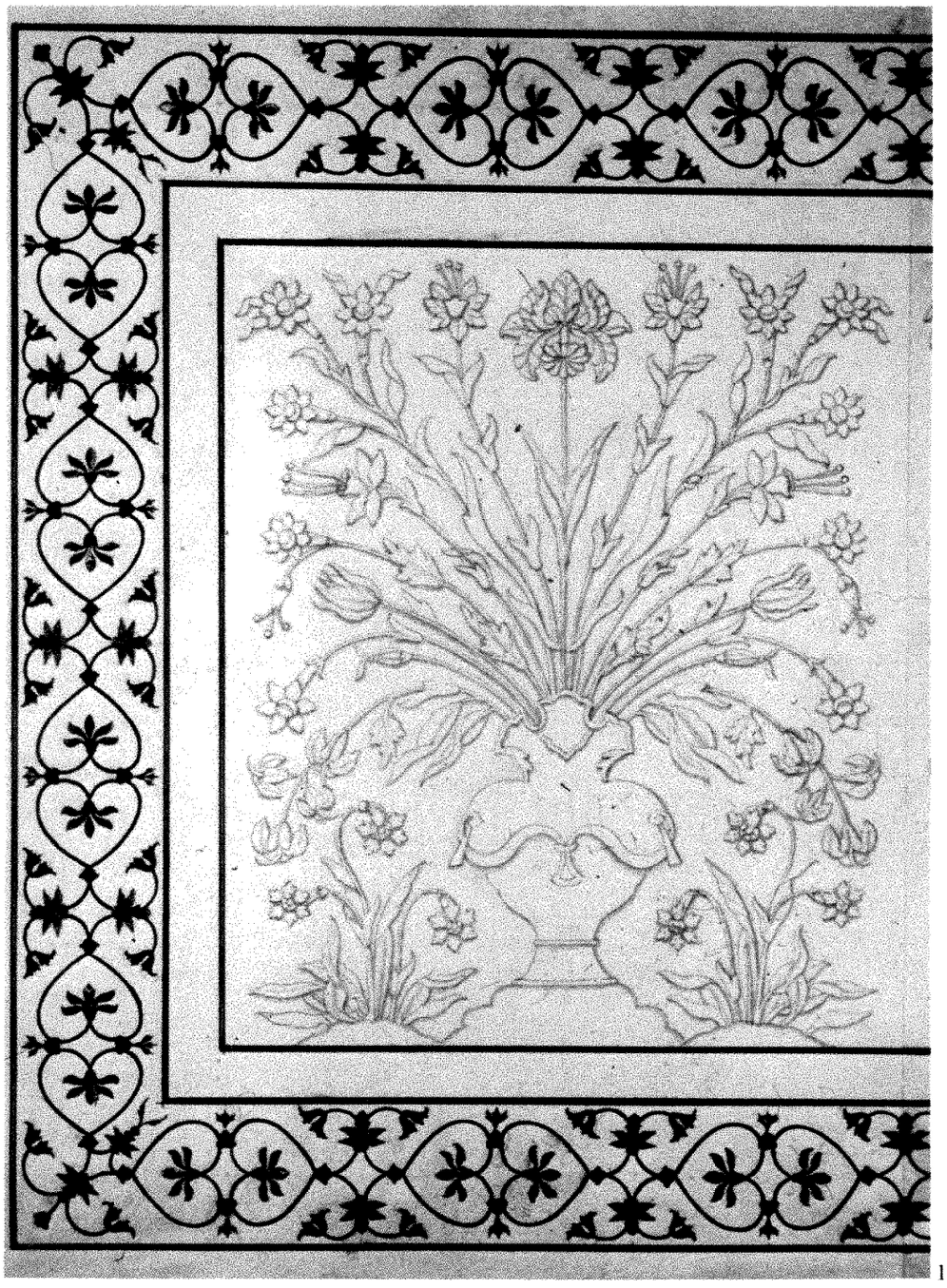
Janice Leoshko

Ever since its creation in the mid-seventeenth century, the Taj Mahal has remained one of the most admired monuments in the world. It was built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for his queen, Mumtaz Mahal (d. AD 1631). Although renowned for his architectural achievements, Shah Jahan was actually a connoisseur of paintings, decorative objects and textiles. The extraordinary aesthetic vision defined in the Taj Mahal is also revealed in these other arts that he patronized. *Romance of the Taj Mahal* will be the first exhibition to examine the significance and interrelated character of the arts from the reign of Shah Jahan. The exhibition will feature over 200 paintings, carpets, textiles, fine gems, glass, jewellery, prints, drawings and photographs selected from public and private collections in the United States, Europe and the Middle East.

Mughal art, which reached its zenith during the reign of Shah Jahan, incorporated Indian styles with Persian and European traditions to create a visual language perfectly suited to the political needs and the aesthetic desires of Shah Jahan. For instance, a nineteenth-century water-colour study of the decorative detail inside the Taj illustrates connections to techniques and motifs used in the decorative arts of the time (figure 1). Flowers, like those sculpted in low relief on the walls of the Taj Mahal, were highly favoured subjects. The lavish, gemlike designs were executed in *pietre dura*, the technique of hard-stone inlay which became extremely popular in Shah Jahan's reign. The techniques of hard-stone carving drew upon previous traditions of Indian craftsmanship, while that of *pietre dura* is probably indebted to Florentine traditions. In addition to the Mughals' general love of nature, floral motifs were favoured since they symbolize ideas of paradise, and indeed, inscriptions on the buildings of Shah Jahan often make it clear that the pavilions were meant to replicate those found in paradise.

The high quality of craftsmanship and the luxurious materials, which are key characteristics of the Taj Mahal, are also typical of the other arts of the period; a superbly crafted ring for a *huqqa* base (figure 2) and a lovely prayer rug (figure 3) are but two of the many such examples included in the exhibition. Exquisite rendering and elegant detail also characterize the painting of the period as is clearly seen in works in the exhibition. One such example depicting Shah Shuja and Gaj Singh (figure 4) presents accurate and perfected portraits in a setting of unearthly beauty. Such styles were the result of the imperial patron's passionate concern with displays of power and wealth as well as his desire to be seen as the perfect ruler of a mighty empire.

The great opulence of Shah Jahan's reign as a conscious reflection of his power is clearly exemplified by the variety and exquisite quality of the paintings, decorative objects and textiles created for his court. In addition to paintings, decorative objects and textiles,



1. Shaikh Latif, detail from a panel with sculpted flowers from the interior dado. From an album prepared for Robert Home. Agra, *c.* AD 1820. Opaque water-colours on paper. 27.3 x 57.2 cm. Gloria Katz and Willard Huyck.

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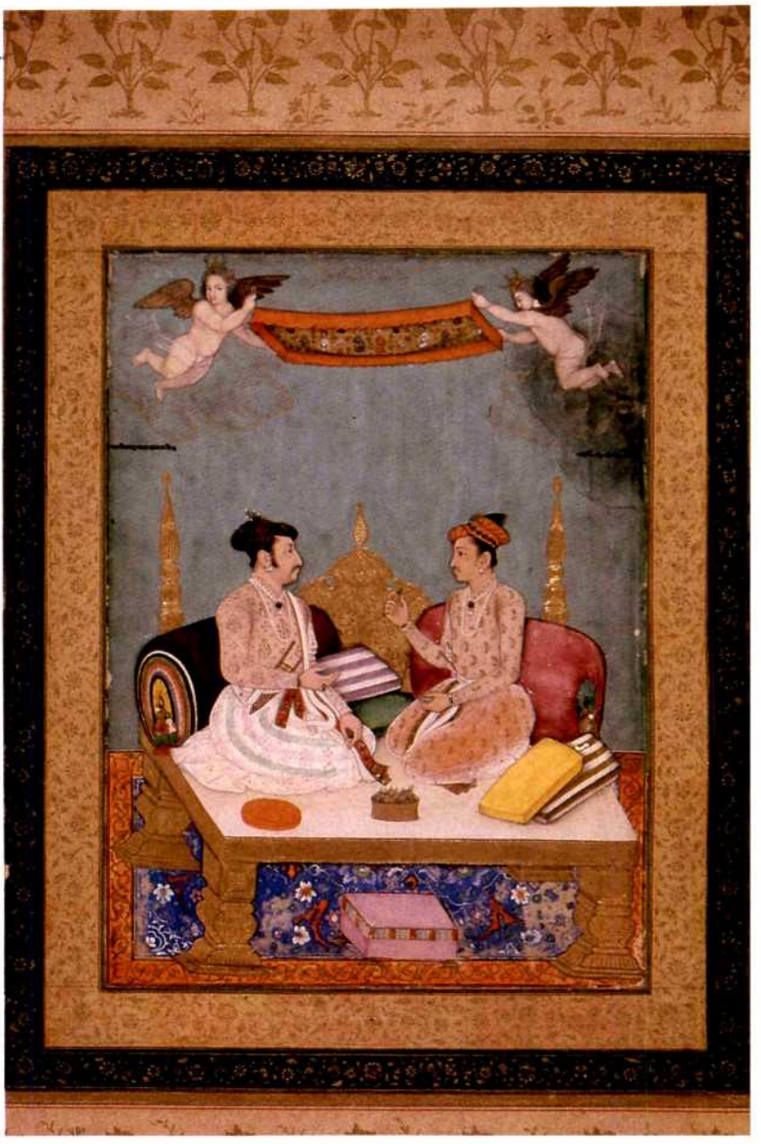

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2. Ring for a *huqqa* base. Mughal, *c.* AD 1635. Gold and enamel. 3 cm. diam.: 14.5 cm. Dar al-Athar al-Islamiya, Kuwait National Museum (LNS 2 J).

3. A prayer rug ("Paravicini"). Mughal, 1625-1650. Silk warp and weft, wool (*pashm*) pile. 110 x 150 cm. Private Collection.

4. Shah Shuja and Gaj Singh of Marwar. Mughal, *c.* AD 1638. Attributed to Bichitr. Opaque water-colours on paper. 25.2 x 17.5 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, from the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase. M.80.6.6.

5. The "Taj Mahal Emerald". Mughal, *c.* AD 1630-1650. Colombian emerald. 4 x 5.1 cm. Weight: 141.13 carats. M. I. Harman, Martin I. Harman, Inc., Benjamin Zucker (Precious Stones Company) and J. and S. S. De Young.

6. Sita Ram, "Taj Mahal by Moonlight." India, *c.* AD 1815. Opaque water-colours on paper. 40.6 x 61 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, Anonymous Loan.

6

the exhibition also includes a number of jewels as Shah Jahan was renowned as a connoisseur of precious gems. These examples include an extraordinary emerald (of 141.13 carats) carved with flowers (figure 5).

Essentially there are two main themes for the exhibition—an examination of the art of the reign of Shah Jahan including his architectural projects and an examination of the development of the mystique of the great Mughal and the Taj Mahal, the building which most perfectly sums up the qualities attached to the term Mughal. Renowned for their aesthetic characteristics and as symbols of great imperial power, the Taj Mahal and other works from the reign of this Mughal ruler have wielded enormous influence throughout the world. The nineteenth-century water-colour illustrated here is one of a large number of studies of the Taj Mahal which document the phenomenal interest taken in the buildings of Shah Jahan's reign. These studies were executed by Indian artists for a largely foreign clientele.

The final section of the exhibition surveys the influence of the art from Shah Jahan's reign on his contemporaries as well as on later generations in India and elsewhere in the world. Notable are three drawings by Rembrandt which show that Rembrandt, a contemporary of Shah Jahan, not only collected Mughal miniatures but also made his own studies of these works. It was the legendary fame of the Mughal rulers which first captured the fascination of the West. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it was the person rather than the buildings that Shah Jahan created who was most often illustrated. One of the drawings by Rembrandt clearly depicts Shah Jahan with his favourite son Dara Shikoh; the two other drawings are similar. Shah Jahan proved a popular subject with Indian artists also; even later Rajput rulers had him depicted. Such emphasis continued in later centuries, as witnessed by a work depicting Shah Jahan leaving his mosque. This was painted in the late nineteenth century by the American artist Edwin Lord Weeks as a romantic vision of Mughal history.

On the other hand, after the British occupation of Agra in the early nineteenth century interest was increasingly focused on the buildings themselves. Indian artists were commissioned to make drawings and Western artists also began to depict views as they travelled in greater numbers to the area. One particularly interesting artist is Sita Ram. This Indian painter accompanied an English officer throughout India to make a visual record of their travels. He did an impressive series of different views of the Taj (figure 6) and other buildings at Agra which anticipated by fifty years Monet's attempts to convey the effects of changing light and atmosphere in a scene. The continued fascination with the monument in the twentieth century is demonstrated by such divergent works as wood-block prints by the Japanese artist Yoshida who travelled to India in the 1930s and works by the abstract expressionist American artist William Congdon, which were painted in the 1950s.

Romance of the Taj Mahal **has been organized by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Accompanying the exhibition will be a fully illustrated book including essays by Pratapaditya Pal, the Museum's Senior Curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art, Janice Leoshko, the Museum's Associate Curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art and Stephen Markel, the Museum's Assistant Curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art as well as Joseph Dye, III, Curator of Asiatic Art, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond. After its première in Los Angeles (December 17, 1989-March 11, 1990) the exhibition will travel to the Toledo Museum of Art (April 28-June 24, 1990), the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond (August 23-November 25, 1990) and The Asia Society, New York (January 10-March 17, 1991).**

"The Gods of the Himalayas"—Buddhist Art of Tibet
The Collection of Gerd-Wolfgang Essen
An Exhibition of the Museum of Far Eastern Art in Cologne, West Germany

Michael Henss

Collections of Tibetan art have been formed fairly recently by collectors of Asian Art; with the exception of the Musée Guimet in Paris none of the major European collections of Tibetan art was formed before 1959, the year when the fourteenth Dalai Lama left his country for a more than thirty-year exile in India. Thereafter, Tibet was no longer a "mystery" which only a few western travellers and diplomats were able to explore.

Some ten thousand Tibetans exiled in India, Nepal, Bhutan and Switzerland had not only carried with them their memories and hardships of being refugees from Communist China, but also many of their precious treasures. In the years when tourism reached Nepal, the splendid objects of Tibetan Buddhist art were bartered for the bare necessities of life by their owners. Although Tibet itself remained a "Forbidden Country" for another twenty years, its fascinating art became familiar abroad. At that time, in the 1960s some western art lovers began collecting Himalayan art. Among those "pioneers" such as John G. Ford of Baltimore, whose treasures have already been on loan for many public exhibitions, Jack Zimmermann of New York, whose large collection will be exhibited in the USA in 1991/92, and Lionel Fournier of France who will be presenting his splendid collection in the Musée Guimet in late 1990, is Gerd-Wolfgang Essen of Hamburg who made his first discovery of Tibetan art exactly twenty years ago.

Once a student of Protestant theology at renowned German universities, Mr. Essen was born in Berlin in 1930. In the fifties he became much interested in contemporary art and opened a modern art gallery in 1967 which he is still running. Full of passion and knowledge of art and its history he gives much support and sponsorship to young artists.

Gerd-Wolfgang Essen's approach to Tibetan culture had its origin in his own religious interest. There is hardly any other art so completely motivated by religious thought as that of Tibet. And it was this "visual dharma" which impressed him so much as a way of religious visualization and imagination. His intellectual background and knowledge of religious science soon made him a very distinctive and systematic collector. He decided to turn one of his rooms into a real Tibetan "Lha-khang" and it was the fourteenth Dalai Lama himself who, by performing a special *puja*, gave the name of the Himalayan Gods to this new home: "Precious, grace and luck-giving Treasure House".

When you enter this home-made Tibetan temple there is nothing in it to remind you of Germany. While other collectors may look for aesthetic highlights or decide on acquiring a new object whenever some interesting or attractive item is in the art market, the Essen Collection was formed

1. Vijaya stupa, Namgyal chorten, *thangka*, 85 x 56 cm., 19th century. Collection and Copyright G. W. Essen, Hamburg. Photo: G. W. Essen.

2. The copper-mountain of Padmasambhava (or the South-western Paradise, zangs-mdog-dpal-ri), *thangka*, 58 x 39 cm., 19th century. Collection and Copyright G. W. Essen, Hamburg. Photo: G. W. Essen.

3. Akshobhya-Gugyasamaja (gsang-'dus-mi-bskyod-pa), bronze, height: 29 cm., 17th century. Collection and Copyright G. W. Essen, Hamburg. Photo: G. W. Essen.

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systematically within a detailed iconological context. By reconstructing the monastic world of Lamaistic ritual art with the help of the learned Tibetan Tsering Tashi Thingo, a high-ranking reincarnation from the Derge Monastery in Kham (Ngari Tulku), Gerd-Wolfgang Essen could now give something back to Tibet which had given him so many of its material and spiritual treasures.

At a time when Tibetan Buddhism was being spread to the West, learned Lamas spread the Buddhist dharma outside Tibet; "Living Buddhas" were being reborn in the bodies of a young Spanish boy or an American woman, why should the Himalayan Gods not take their seat in a Western home, in a new holy place in exile? Thus, the cultural value of the Essen Collection is beyond an "art collection" in the usual sense . . . it is this broad and deep spirit behind all these exquisite paintings, bronze images, ritual objects, decorative textiles, dance masks and other objets d'art totalling 650 items, which makes this collection unique.

The collection has been formed systematically to present a visual dharma which might be already lost in present-day Tibet. The iconographic "programme" of a Tibetan altar, the special traditions of different schools, a complete "Gonkhang" for the protective deities—this is how the art is presented in its religious rather than its art-historical context.

Mr. Essen who was supposed to have become a Christian priest, found his religious understanding going beyond the institutions of the traditional Lutheran church. He is not interested in the "antiques" or "aesthetics" of a culture which has created one of the most complicated and sophisticated pantheons of deities and, in many aspects, is an highly esoteric art understandable only by those who are practising themselves as real insiders initiated into a hermetic world beyond the visible reality.

So it was only logical that Mr. Essen should find in a manner of speaking, his Tibetan master and he could not have done better: Tsering Tashi Thingo, born into an Eastern Tibetan family of high aristocratic origin and recognized as "Ngari Tulku" only two years later, has become his chief adviser and as the co-compiler of a two-volume catalogue. This extremely knowledgeable Tibetan, who has already been living for many years in Germany has increased considerably the scholarly value of this documentation. The beautiful catalogue

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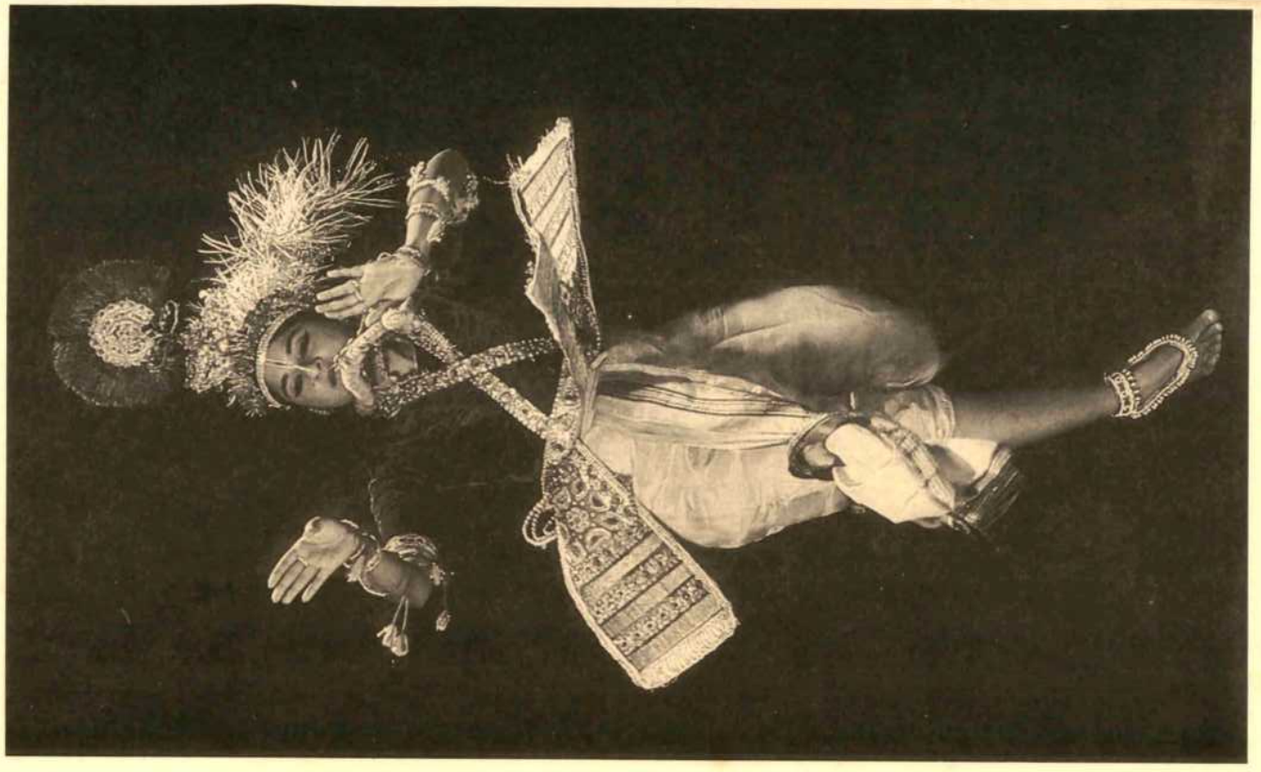
4. Srimati Devi (Ina-mo dud-sol-ma), *thangk*
84.5 x 58.5 cm., 17th century. Collection an
Copyright G. W. Essen, Hamburg.
Photo: G. W. Essen.

5. Tzogshing, *thangka,* 56 x 40.5 cm., 18th century. Collection and Copyright G. W. Essen, Hamburg. Photo: G. W. Essen.

covers one thousand years of Buddhist Himalayan art and includes a Foreword by the fourteenth Dalai Lama. With about 680 pages and 650 colour and black and white reproductions it will be one of the most comprehensive and important publications on Tibetan art. Even the non-German reader will find i very useful. The price of the two volum (hardbound catalogue) is approximately US dollars 95.

The exhibition, a major event in Asian art, is organized by the Museum for Far Eastern Art (Museum füer Ostasiatische Künst) at Cologne, West Germany, whose Director, Professor Dr. Roger Goepper, is one of the leading experts in Japanese esoteric art and Chinese painting and who is at present doing detailed research work into the Himalayan wall-paintings of the Alchi Monastery (Ladakh).
The dates of the exhibition are:
Cologne, Germany, Kunsthalle, November 4, 1989-February 4, 1990
West Berlin, Germany, July-September, 1990.



Areibi (bhramari-bheda *in Sanskrit*), *spiral movements in* tandava. *Jumping and turning around with left leg crossing to right before arriving at the sitting posture. Artiste: Sruti Banerjee. Photo: Pankaj Shah.*

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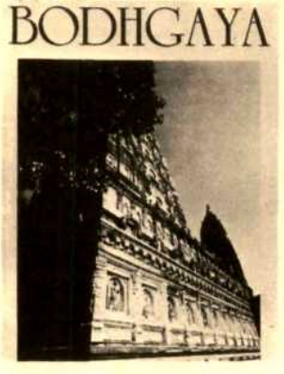

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Book Reviews

Title	:	**Ratnakara's Haravijaya—An Introduction to the Sanskrit Court Epic**
Writer	:	David Smith
Publisher	:	Oxford University Press, Delhi
Format	:	22 x 14.5 cm., vii, 322 pages
Price	:	Rs. 200.00

The writer of this witty, literate, and scholarly book suggests that the *mahakavya* or Hindu court epic continued the traditions established by the great epics particularly the *Ramayana.* The overriding concern was "to proclaim the triumph of the hero and the defeat of the foe." While these long poems (*mahakavya*) normally dealt with the affairs of the gods, their intent was to glorify and, in a certain sense, to divinize the life and actions of their royal patrons.

In his first three chapters, David Smith provides a general discussion of the *mahakavya.* The first chapter places the *Haravijaya* in its historical context through a discussion of several antecedent works. The second chapter examines the stance taken to these works by theoretical writers on poetry. The existence of considerable tension between working poets and scholars of poetry is discussed. The former ignore the categorizations and prescriptions of the latter and the latter ignore the actual works produced by the former. Next, Smith considers the role of the *mahakavya* in court society. He argues that one of the functions of these works is like a ritual, that is, to strengthen and provide a sense of security in an otherwise contentious and insecure society. The poems achieve this through eulogy. At the same time, the poets are members of groups whose chief functions are play and irresponsible creativity. Poets like gods and kings—had a licence to create disorder. (The tension between order and disorder in royal society has been brilliantly analysed by David Shulman in his recent book, *The King and the Clown in South Indian Myth and Poetry*). The writers of the *mahakavya* Smith suggests, enhanced the power, if not the clarity, of their works by absorbing some of the qualities of the *Vedas.* They used these qualities to invoke contemporary powers—both kings and gods.

The following chapters discuss the *Haravijaya* itself. Smith begins with Ratnakara's own views of the work as expressed through several appended verses. In bold and assertive verses the poet advises the young king, his patron, to take this work as a model, if he hopes to attain the status of a poet. In declaring himself to be a second Bana (the renowned seventh-century poet), Ratnakara seems to be asserting the existence of a new poetic tradition, one characterized by a "bold grandeur of vision."

Smith then turns to the structure of the poem, of the canto and the verse. He shows that this long, some have suggested over-long, poem is "harmoniously proportioned." Various rhythms are set up through the treatment of subjects (the events of the poem) and themes (such as the mountain and the ocean). The length and the simplicity or complexity of the treatment of these themes and the complex play upon words are carefully manipulated. The core of the poem, Shiva's mystic union with Parvati, is preceded by a description of Shiva's world, by notification of Andhaka's (the demon king) crimes against the gods, by Shiva's decision to send an envoy, and by the dalliance of his court. This is followed by a description of the envoy's journey, by the dialogue between the envoy and the demon, and by the climactic battle between the followers of Shiva and Andhaka.

Smith devotes three chapters to the character of the beings in the poem—the *Ganas* or courtiers of Shiva, the women, and the gods and goddesses. Through their various speeches the *Ganas* show themselves to be complex manifestations of the adult world (bold, courageous and strong) and the youthful sphere (boastful and lacking self-control). Their turbulent and potentially destructive energy manifests the Lord which they serve, and is only controlled by Shiva himself. In the *Ganas* discussion of actions that might be taken against the demons, and later in a debate between the demons and the envoy, arguments for war alternate with those for policy. The logic of emotion, rather than that of rhetoric, is at play here; there is no consideration of politics or political theory. Smith argues that these powerful, unstable beings are similar to humans; they are also related to demons, who are "indistinct mirror images" but inherently dangerous.

Women—particularly highly erotic women—are an integral part of the *Haravijaya.* In form and act they are supreme symbols of love, very much desirable to men. But as symbols they lack personality; unlike men, they have no names. Instead, they have moods (anger, jealousy, arousal) and take appropriate actions of their own. Their parts are described by a myriad of epithets which Smith bravely enumerates. Yet, he notes, men are shadowy figures who do not express their love. Women are passionate and generally faithful; men are promiscuous and in constant motion on the fringes. But men release and control women's passion. Even the poet keeps a safe distance from women. In these sections he adopts verse forms in which the second half of a line comments on the description in the first. The very importance of women requires that they inhabit a kind of inner landscape. Theirs is a world of pleasure, and to travel into it is to take a "holiday" from the intensity of the exterior world, from war and destruction. The journey takes Shiva's courtiers into nature on the slopes of Mount Mandara. Here, women and their lovers enjoy a new sense of community, a freedom from everyday constraints. Dance, music, drama and, to a lesser extent, even ritual and immanent fertility are enacted. But nature is not entirely removed from the external world—ugliness, impermanence, jealousy, betrayal, and fear of women's sexuality are also found here. Smith also analyses the meaning of allusions to ornament, Love's arrow, and fire.

Smith notes that *kavya* often adopts an attitude toward the gods and goddess in which the awesome, the horrible, and the numinous are neutralized. The poet's display of his virtuosity may even arrogantly demean these divine beings. The *kavya* constrains, simplifies, and "purifies" the content of rich and "messy" Puranic myth, subjecting it to the tightly controlled art of the poet. For example, in the *Haravijaya* the flowers and colours associated with the gods receive as much emphasis as the gods themselves. The blue poison imbibed by Shiva (*kalakuta*) is a recurring motif when the poet plays with the themes of love-sickness, the relation of Shiva and Parvati, and the god's final triumph over the powerful demon which he himself had engendered. The white lotus seat of Brahma is another theme richly developed by the poet, who sometimes emphasizes the subordinate position of the "grandfather". Vishnu has a similarly ambiguous position. Portrayed in his terrible and powerful aspect as the manifestation of the man-lion at the beginning of the poem, the awesome power of the god is evoked through allusions to red and rubies. Nonetheless, Vishnu fades into obscurity at Shiva's final triumph. Ultimately, Shiva is the focus of the poem. His various forms are developed in introductory verses—as king, as dancer (in an exciting description), and as Parameshvara. The poet evokes the philosophic interconnections between Shiva and speech, the mantra, and light. The order of his eternal state is contrasted with the disorder of the temporal—where demons have displaced the gods. It is Shiva's role to re-establish order.

In the central episode of the poem—the merging of Shiva and Parvati—through gradually relaxed tension, the deities achieve the happiness of love, and through punning, the beauty of a developed drama. Chandi, the terrible form of the goddess, becomes important in the final battle. A long hymn of praise emphasizes her terrible aspect but also her ability to grant salvation. Smith finds evidence in

the theology expressed by these verses that the poet was a follower of the Kaula path, a variety of Tantra focused on this terrific goddess.

At the climax of the poem, Shiva destroys the demon king and returns triumphant to his city. Smith shows convincingly that this version of the Puranic myth not only strips it of a highly charged content but also secularizes the story. Thus, the god's victory both glorifies the victories of the king's ancestors and is a model for Ratnakara's patron to emulate. At the same time, the poet makes of this simplified account a sequence of elegantly and powerfully realized tableaux.

Smith argues convincingly against some Western interpreters of Sanskrit poetry, that *kavya* contains a rich array of symbols which are powerfully interrelated. For example, a Freudian interpreter can find numerous sexual symbols in the churning of the ocean by Mount Mandara. While *kavya* employs stereotyped themes and images, these are symbols a poet can manipulate to powerful effect. These symbols refer to mythic nature such as flying mountains, "the pure white form which is the manifestation of fame and beauty," oppositions which embody tensions, the lotus and the mirror. Ratnakara employs few symbols from the first category; he avoids those connoting human fertility. Jewels are symbols more frequently employed. Fame and beauty are qualities of men and women respectively which are conveyed by a number of symbols. The moon and its disfiguring spot, and the ocean which contains the submarine fire are primary among symbols which convey tension; these are greatly elaborated in simile and metaphor. The lotus is a tensile sexual symbol in conjunction with the fickle male bee, but elsewhere harmoniously combines strength and weakness, beauty and decay. The poet also elaborates symbolic associations of his own; for example, there is the play upon his name, which means "ocean", with aspects of that vast and all encompassing symbol.

Smith suggests that the use of puns is the most noteworthy feature of Ratnakara's style; through such play upon words the poet imparts his personal skill and energy. Puns, Smith suggests, have particular explosive energy which destroy pure *rasa* and create a deeper emotion. While double meaning is probably an important feature of the duplicitous court society and discourse, within the poem, it evokes the fusion of Shiva and Parvati. Puns also play on the imperfection and tension which result from the separation of the divine pair. Equally important, through puns Ratnakara equates the creation of the divine unity by Shiva and of a beautiful play by the poet. Ratnakara often uses puns to break apart reality, to make it indecisive. Puns may also refer to the ambiguous political reality of the day—the uncertainty of his young patron's position, the witty battles of courtiers who struggle through the language of indirection, detachment, and even poetry itself.

In his introduction, Smith notes that court epics have been denigrated by many students of Indian poetry, and ignored altogether by most modern readers. In particular, the length of the *Haravijaya* and its apparent repetition of well-worn formulas of plot and expression have discouraged many likely readers. Smith places the work in the culture of a particular court with particular political circumstances; he shows how the poet manipulated the plot, with dramatic and expressive conventions. It is to Smith's credit that this volume convincingly demonstrates the originality and baroque beauty of Ratnakara's poem.

—**John M. Fritz**

Title	:	***Rajarajeswaram*—The Pinnacle of Chola Art**
Writer	:	B. Venkataraman
Publisher	:	Mudgala Trust, Madras
Format	:	25 x 10.5 cm., 393 pages, and 160 illustrations
Price	:	Not given

Sri Venkataraman unfolds the story of Rajarajeswaram in eleven chapters (380 pages), with appendices, a glossary of technical terms, photographs, line drawings and sketches. In the preface he records, "it was divine dispensation to have delayed the publication till 1985, when the whole of India celebrated the one thousandth year of Rajaraja's Coronation." Certainly it is. As the tallest of all Chola temples, exhibiting the most elaborate of architectural patterns, adorning the largest number of sculptural wealth and murals, preserving the richest collection of lithic record, Rajarajeswaram represents the pinnacle of Chola art. The book under review is the highest tribute to the greatest scion of the Chola dynasty for his invaluable and indelible visible creation. Sri Venkataraman has had the good fortune of being trained to hold the sexton's axe under his illustrious father, the late Sri Balasubramaniam. As one reads the book the sure and masterly style can be found.

The Cholas came into prominence virtually during the regime of Arunmolideva (Raja Raja I). Arunmolideva had to face the stress and strains of internecine wars, although he underwent the political apprenticeship with determination. The school of adversity had its own lessons which he profitably used and became the most powerful ruler of the south. Marshalling all the facts and figures in support of Rajaraja's campaigns, the writer reconfirms the historical findings of the illustrious historian Nilakanta Sastri. While referring to his earliest *prasasti, "Kantalur Salai Kalam arutharuli"* (p. 27) he could have explained the expressions with consequential political misfortunes of the Chola rulers who had to fight "a hundred years war" (to borrow Kunjan Pillai's phrase). It would have brought to naught further controversies or at least he could have assessed it properly. The Chola navy hoisted its flag in the naval expedition against Ilam (Sri Lanka) and the Maldive islands and thereby consolidated Rajaraja's position in the whole of the south.

A devout Saivite and an enlightened patron of the arts and crafts, science and learning, Rajaraja lavished the entire resources of his empire on creative activities of which the grandest edifice is Rajarajeswaram. The dramatic discovery of Devaram Songs earned him a special niche in the Saivite liturgy.

After the Cholas, 'this temple of temples' was patronized by the Vijayanagar rulers, the Tanjore and the Maratha Nayaks. It, perforce, had to be a mute witness to the atrocities of the French in AD 1758, followed by those of the British in AD 1771. For over thirty years, the British converted this cultural monument into a defence store and finally Wellesley robbed the kingdom. The writer has succeeded in presenting the historical background by tapping all sources, but the methodology of citing references leaves much to be desired.

Though there is eloquent epigraphic testimony to the fact that "in the 25th regnal year, corresponding to AD 1010", the consecration ceremony had taken place, it is conspicuously silent on details like the date of commencement, the number of days taken, the engineering skill or technical know-how, by which the solid *sikhara* was lifted into place. It is hard to believe that a ruler, so particular in recording the minutest detail such as the name and number of the street and the door of *talipendir,* would ignore some of these important details. Hence it is not impossible for scholars in the field to reconstruct the facts by piecing collateral evidence. The measurements of the main *vimana* evoke wonder. "Rising to the varying heights on a unitary basement which measures 30.17 metres

across, 54.86 metres along the axis of the temple..... the dominant Sri Vimana measuring a giant square of 30.175 metres at the base, with 13 *talas* to a height of 36.50 metres..... The sikhara is a single granite block, measuring a square 7.77 metres to a side and weighing 80 tons." The stupa alone is 3.80 metres in height, proclaiming the glory of the creator. He finds comparison only with the earliest of its genre, the Pallava Shore temple at Mamallapuram and with the Gangaikonda Choleswaram of his son, both of which are outclassed by this grand temple. "The main deity is in the form of an enormous cylindrical *lingam* of 1.66 metres in diameter, mounted on *avudaiyar* (*yonipitha*) of 5.44 metres diameter." To enshrine this *mahalinga,* the architectural measurements had to be of gigantic proportions. But what is beyond our understanding is the technical know-how with which this superhuman engineering feat was accomplished. It remains a *tableau vivant.*

The chapter on murals and dance panels is a mine of information on the art galleries and an amazing account of the art of *Bharatanatya.* The sanctum sanctorum has two walls around (17.98 metres outer wall and 14.63 metres on one side) which conform to the *Sandhara* type of the Dravida school. But the uniqueness of it is the division of the corridor space "into ground and first floors; those of the lower floor are covered with murals, while those of the upper tier have been converted into a *Bharatanatyam* gallery". There are fifteen chambers in the *Sandhara* ambulatory corridor, which are transformed into art galleries. It seems that the Chola example was followed by the Nayaks of Tanjore, as can be seen now. It was for Prof. S. K. Govindaswamy to bring to light this art treasure to the art world, but it was for distinguished scholars from Paramasivam to Sivaramamurti to propagate and interpret them. The writer has done full justice to each panel. The most valuable painting is Rajaraja's portrait with his mentor Kuruvur Devar.

An exhaustive study of the lithic panel depicting *Karanas* of *Bharatanatya* is done aptly from the relevant records of *natyasastra.* The photo plates help as visual aids which enhance the value of the book. The writer laments his constraints on space otherwise he would have given further illustrations. We hope he will take up this study and bring out a separate volume in due course for the benefit of art lovers.

Rajarajeswaram is the only temple of its kind where a complete inventory of the amazing number of metallic images gifted to it in a short span of not more than a decade, or so, by Rajaraja, his sister, queens, chief and priests, has been left to posterity. The writer justifies a monograph for this reason alone. The tradition set by Sembian Devi, who donated rich gifts in order to expiate her sins, was followed by Rajaraja and others. Indeed the inventory is startling! From the simple torso of Mohenjo-daro, the art of sculpture reached its artistic and philosophic heights in the *adavallan* of the Cholas. The *adavallan* (Nataraja) of Tiruvalangadu and Tanjore are contemporaneous and "possibly from the same atelier" opines the writer (p. 160). One would be inclined to agree with him as the specimens are noted for the graceful modelling and animated stances. The ruler did not spare any effort to make his beloved deity the richest in sculptural wealth. It is a pity that most of the gifts have been irretrievably lost.

The chapter on jewellery and ornaments forms the best contribution to this study. Painstaking research has yielded varieties of the most beautiful ornaments with appropriate line drawings and pictures covering more than forty-eight pages. All the inscriptional evidence is culled besides the visible glorious creations of the age to compile the vast collection of jewellery.

The connoisseur is amply compensated with a fund of information on every aspect of study of this *alayachakravarti.* The epigraphic documents conveying the administrative arrangements are formidable (103 lithic records). Details regarding the title of the grant, designation and respective functions, prevailing wages and other remunerations, crimes and punishments are available. A modern legal luminary is bound to envy the diction and thoroughness.

Unlike his father the late Sri Balasubramaniam, Sri Venkataraman is not a professional art historian, yet, he has found enough time to undertake a study of this magnitude. He deserves full praise for his lucidity of expression, his graphic description and search for perfection. *Rajarajeswaram* is a definitive contribution to the study of Chola art.

—**K. K. A. Venkatachari and V. S. Nayar**

Title	:	**Sacred India. Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism**
Writer	:	Ann C. Boger and Joellen K. De Oreo
Publisher	:	The Cleveland Museum of Art in collaboration with Indiana University Press, USA
Format	:	22.5 x 19.5 cm., 60 pages and 36 illustrations
Price	:	Not given

The stated intention of the writers of this booklet is 'to present some of the more popular imagery of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism as well as to explain their iconography and myths.' Within the limited number of sixty pages with about half as many black and white photographs, they have succeeded admirably in giving basic information without mystifying or over-simplifying the facts. This publication could well serve as a useful introduction, for the interested novice, to the field of Indian Art.

The booklet begins with an introduction to the environmental context of the subcontinent, followed by an outline of the principal cultural developments which form the background to the development of the three main Asian philosophies and religions. In the preface the writers caution the reader that the works illustrated were not meant to be seen as isolated works of art but as articles of devotion belonging to elaborate systems of worship. This fact is important to emphasize, as many tend to see only the 'object' without going deeper into its meaning and context.

Chapter one, on Hinduism, begins with the concept of *maya* and leads to the idea of the Supreme Being and the personified trinity. The myths, forms, attributes and nature of the three deities along with Mahadevi are outlined in detail.

Chapter two, deals with Buddhism. Here the historical Buddha is first introduced, followed by an account of the oral tradition and how his teachings and life story were first recorded. Buddhist art begins with an aniconic phase when the Buddha's presence was represented by ancient pre-Buddhist symbols. However, in the later phase after the first century AD, the Buddha is represented iconically. The subjects for Buddhist art were the four main events of his life: Birth, Enlightenment, his First Sermon and his Death. The Bodhisattva and the Mahayana phase of Buddhism are also discussed.

In the third and final chapter, the Jaina philosophy and art-forms are presented. In marked contrast to the Buddhist and particularly the Hindu tradition is the standardized depiction of the twenty-four Tirthankaras who are the major focus of worship.

Mention must be made of the number of photographs used to illustrate the text. They are small but very informative. Most of the sculptures and paintings have been selected from the very fine collection in the Cleveland Museum. This is supplemented by examples in Indian museums as well as illustrations of religious sites showing sculpture in its original context.

—**Arthur Duff**

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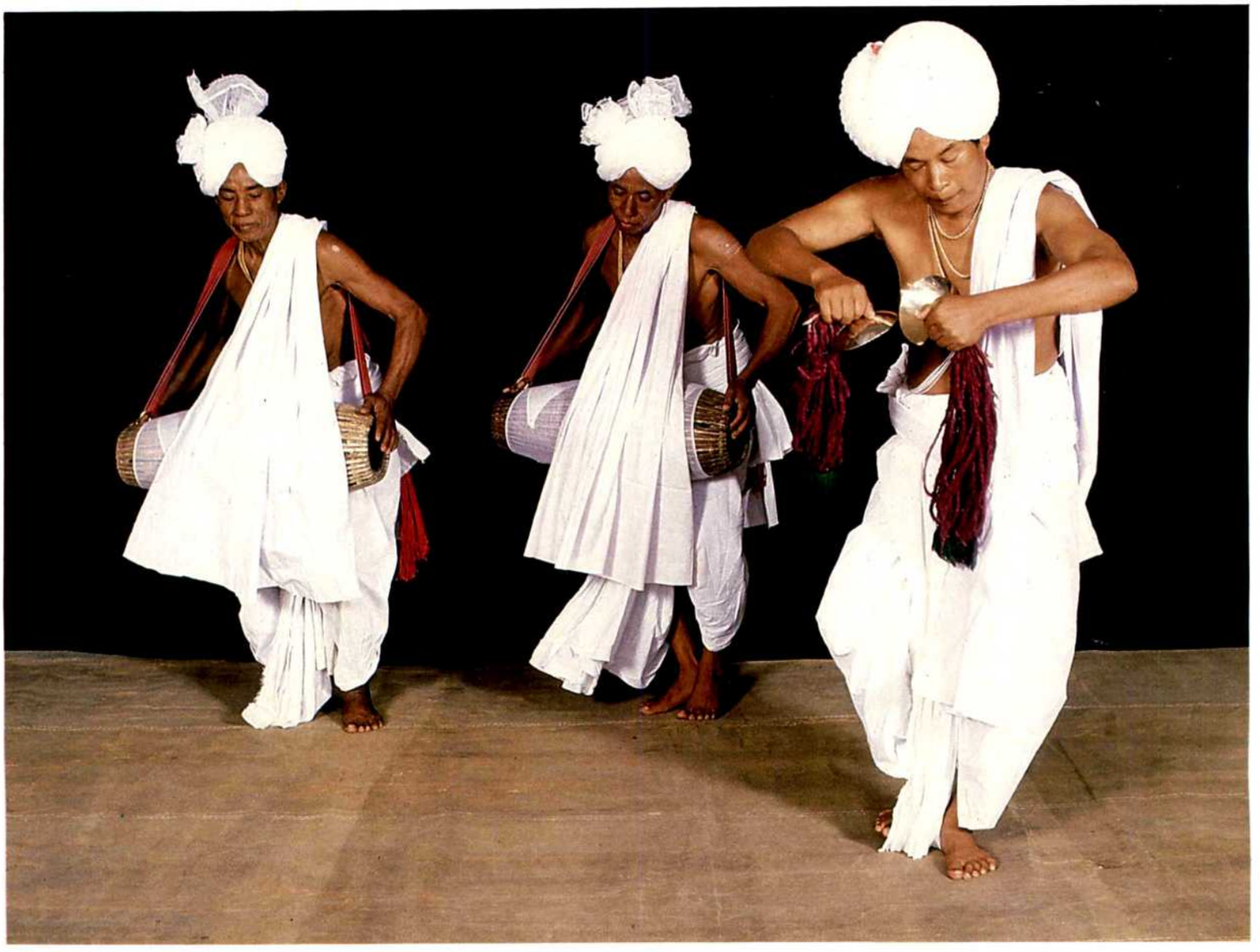
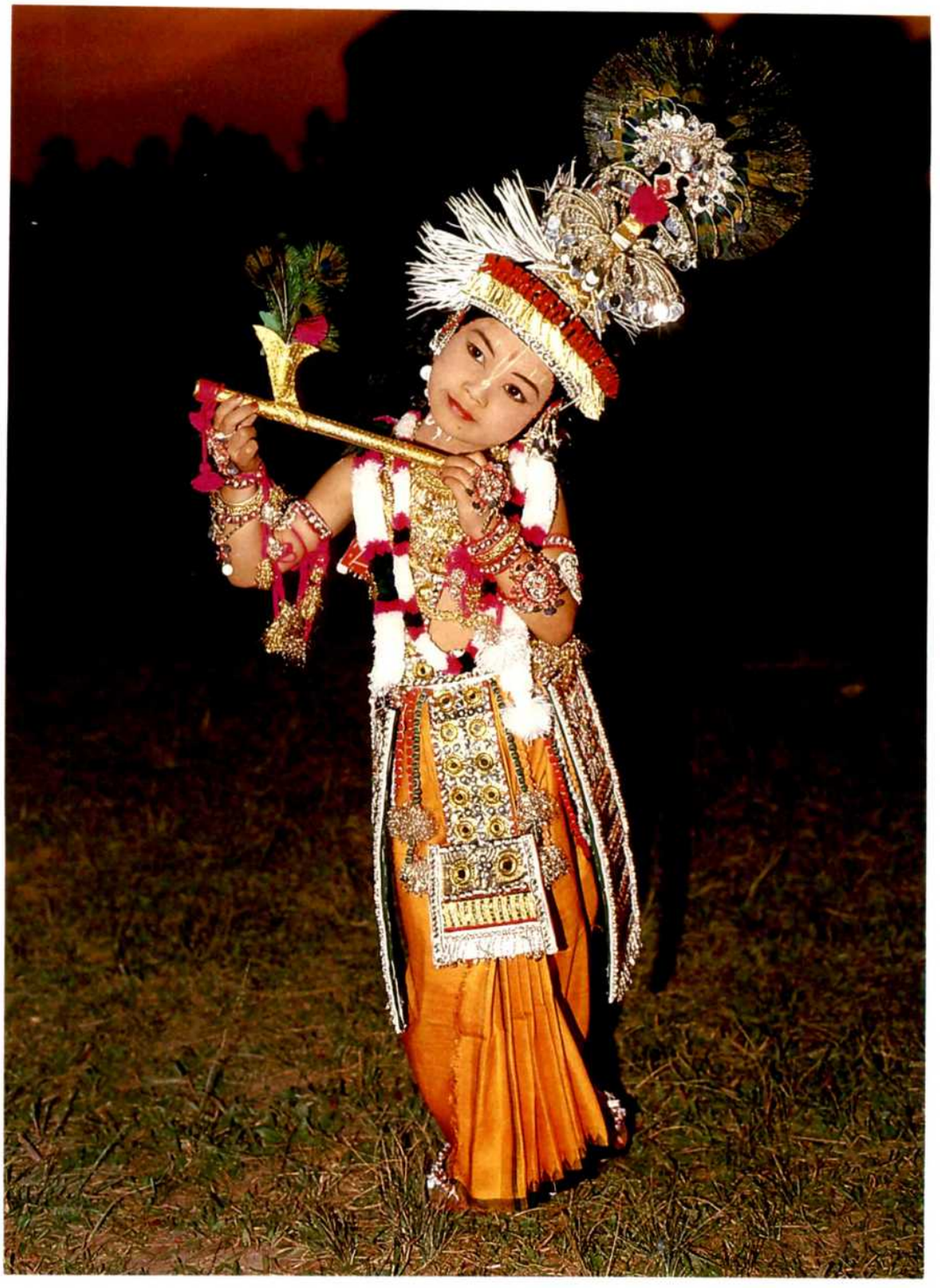


A *Sankirtan*—two drum players and a cymbal player. Photo: Pankaj Shah.



Child Krishna in *Gopa-rasa*. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

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A *gopi* invoking Krishna in a *Nitya-rasa* performance. Artiste: Latasana Devi. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

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Thang-Ta — sword and spear dancers. Artistes: members of Huyel Lallong Manipur Thang-Ta Association. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

A group of *gopalakas* in *Gopa-rasa*. Photo: Pankaj Shah.

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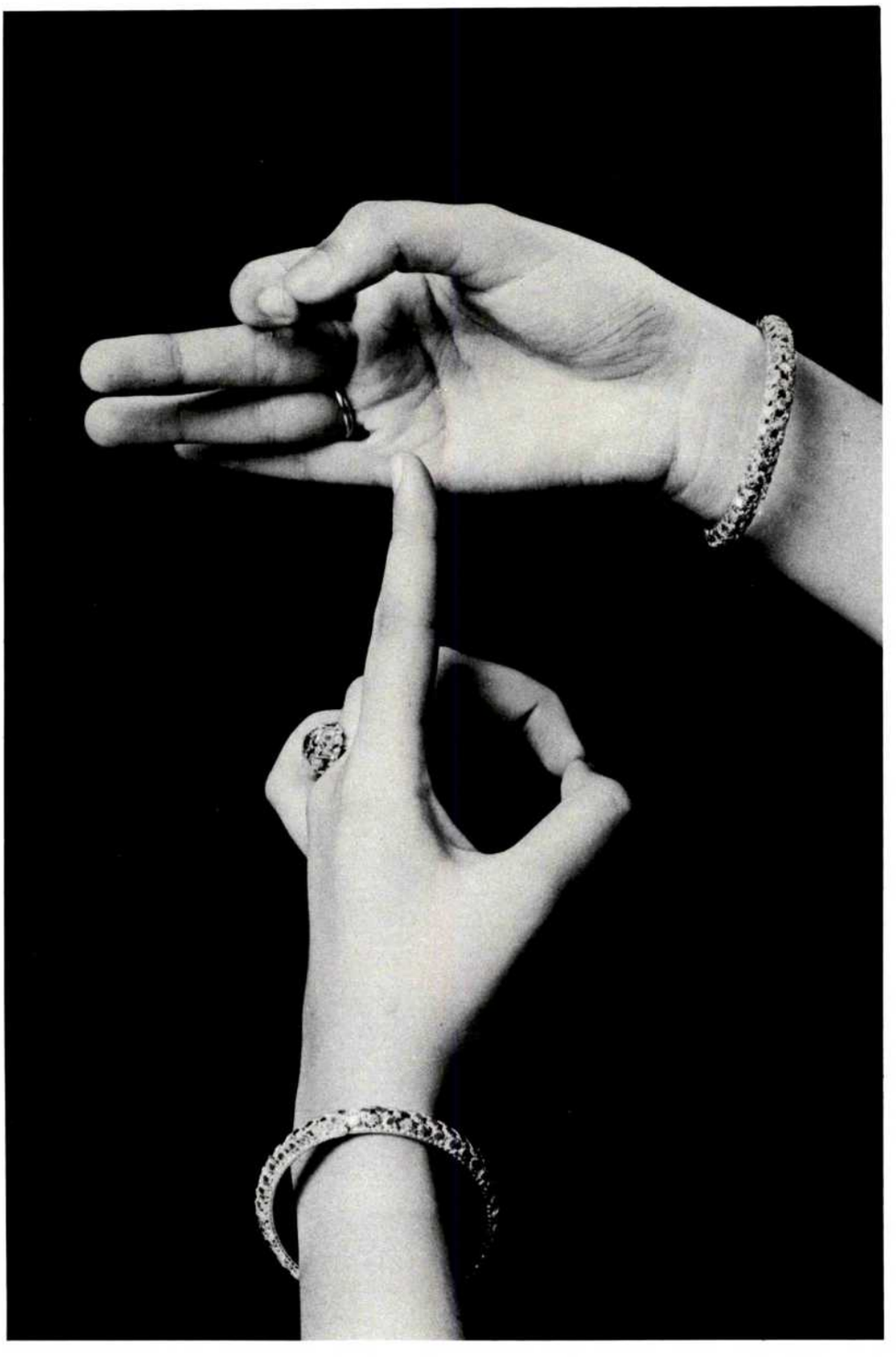

Malatira mala—piercing a flower to make a garland. Left hand representing a needle—*suchimukha hasta;* right hand depicting a flower—*sandansha hasta*. Photo: Narendra N. Shah.

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Kruntana—plucking a flower. Both hands depicting *sandansha hasta*. Photo: Narendra N. Shah.

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Kankana—bangles. Both hands depicting *suchimukha hasta*. Photo: Narendra N. Shah.

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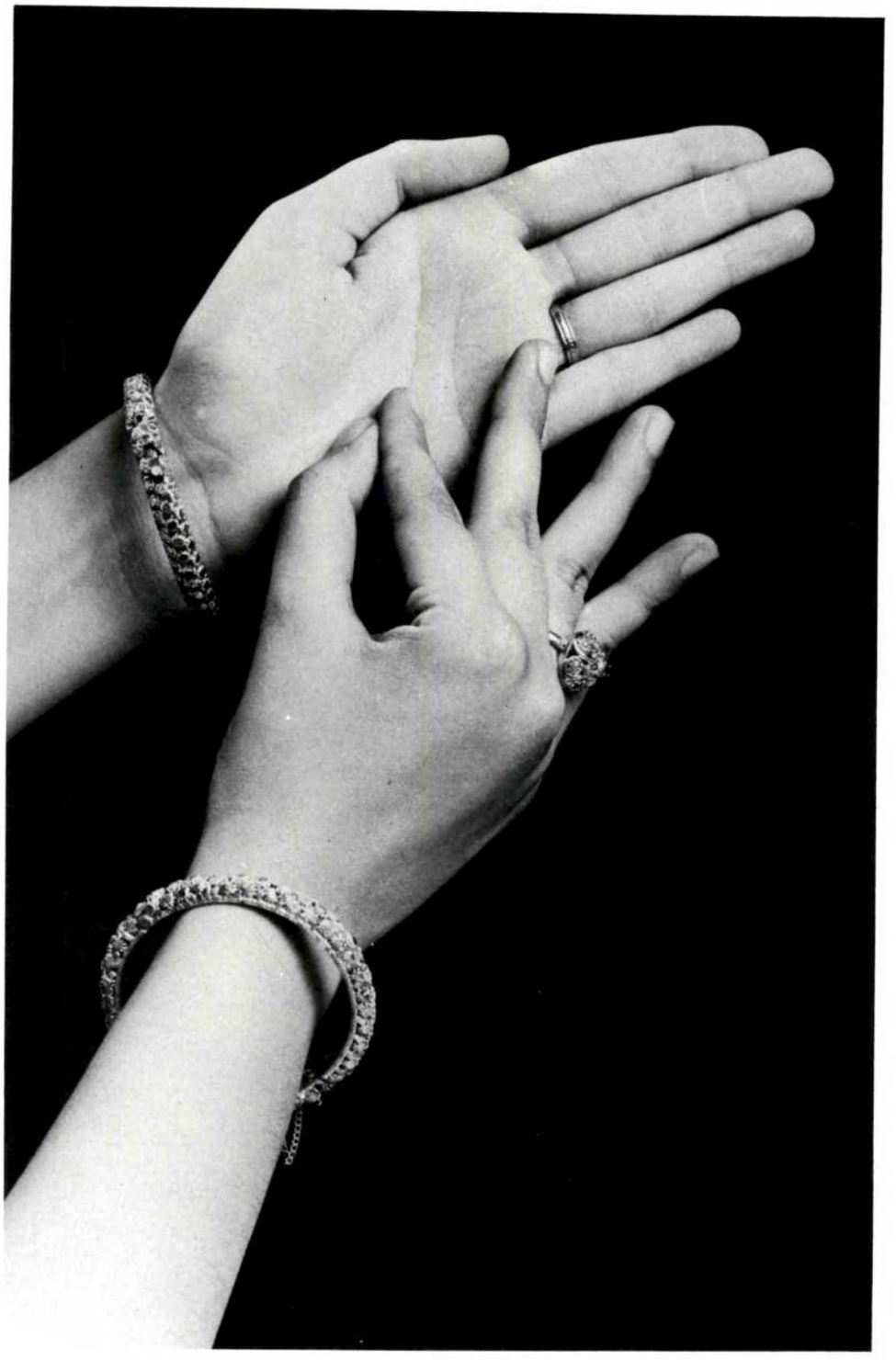

Patralekhan — letter writing. Left hand depicting the paper — *pataka hasta;* right hand depicting writing — *sandansha hasta.*
Photo: Narendra N. Shah.

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Pidhira upare Pidhi—placing one platform above another. Both hands depicting *hansapaksha hasta*.
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A drooping blossom on a branch. Left hand representing a branch—*hansashya hasta;* right hand depicting a blossom—*padmakosh hasta*. Photo: Narendra N. Shah.

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Mormukut—a crown of peacock feathers. Left hand depicting headgear—*mushti hasta;* right hand representing the peacock feather—*pataka hasta.* Photo: Narendra N. Shah.

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Hand depicting an arrow—*khatakamukam hasta*. Photo: Narendra N. Shah.

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Hand depicting a cow—*dhenu hasta*. Photo: Narendra N. Shah.

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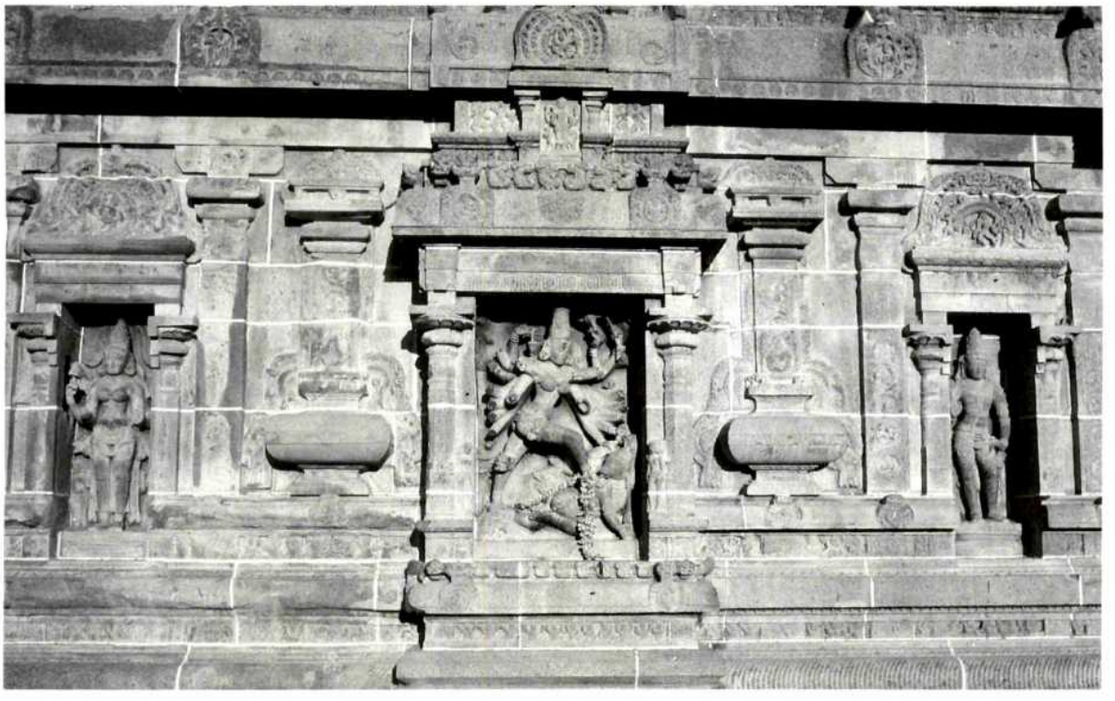

West Gopuram of the Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, AD twelfth century. Discussed in the article, The work of the archaeological survey of India by Thomas Tuohy, APOLLO, September 1988. This issue also includes an important article on problems in early Chinese ceramics.

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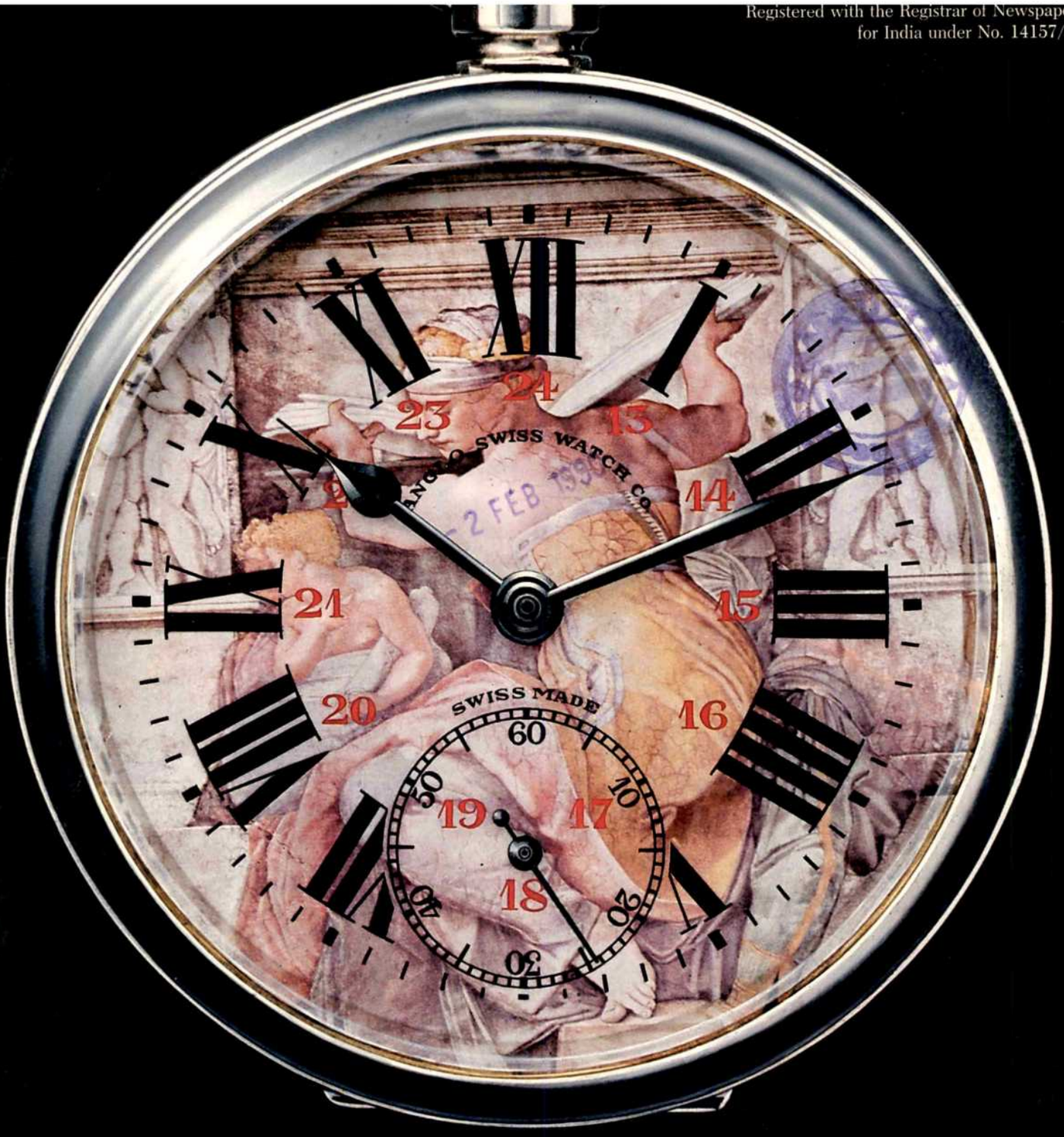

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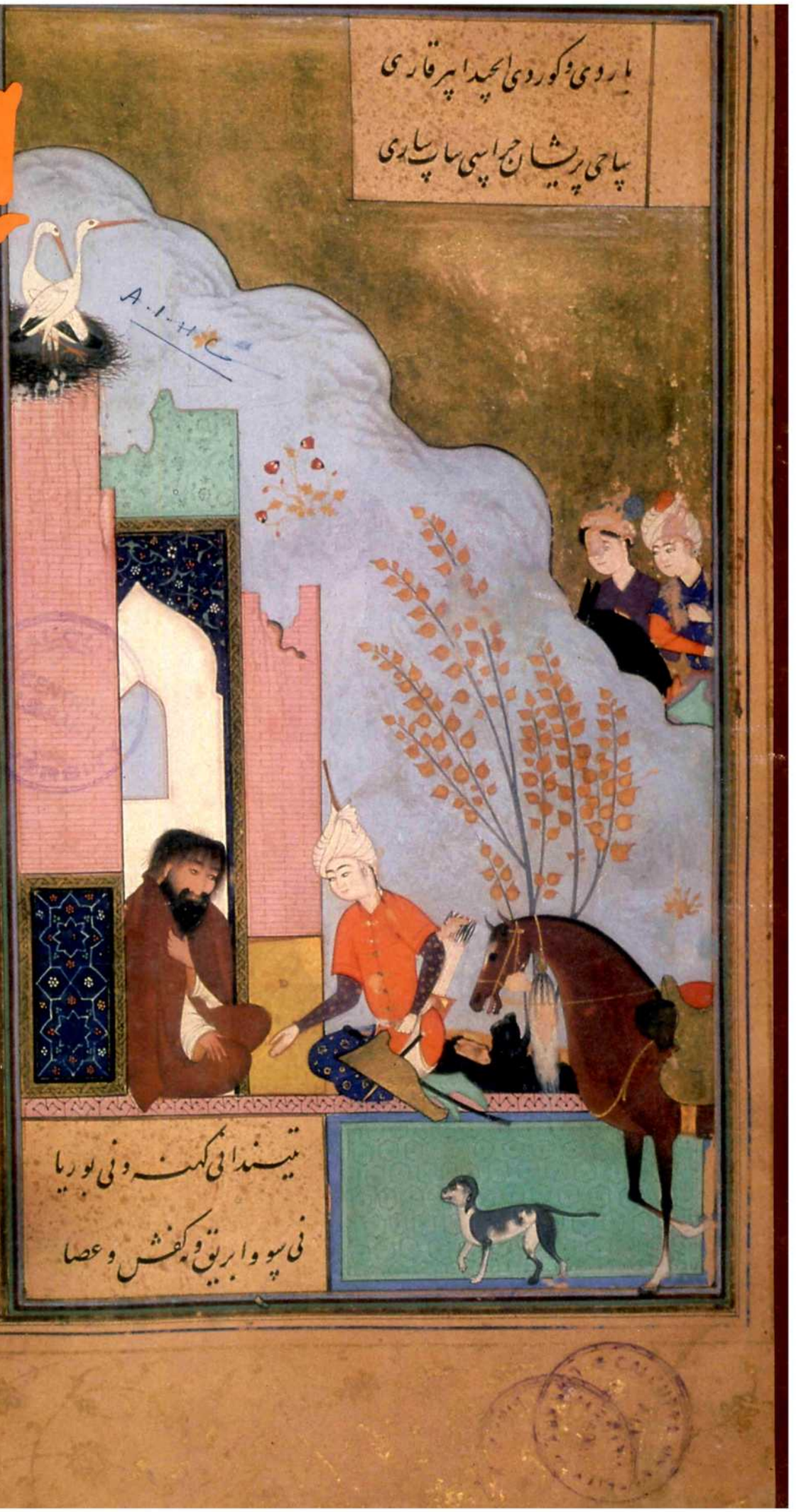

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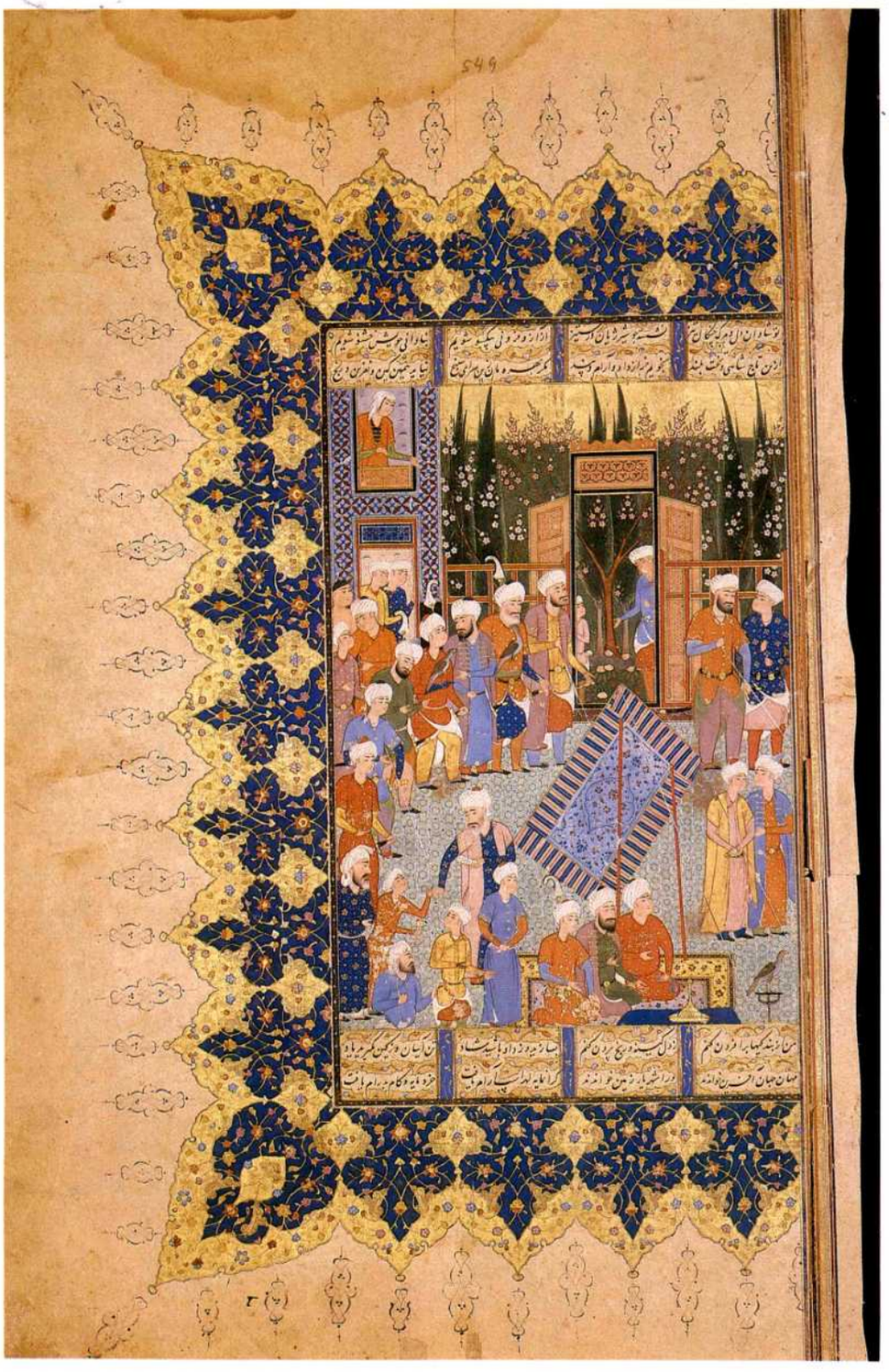

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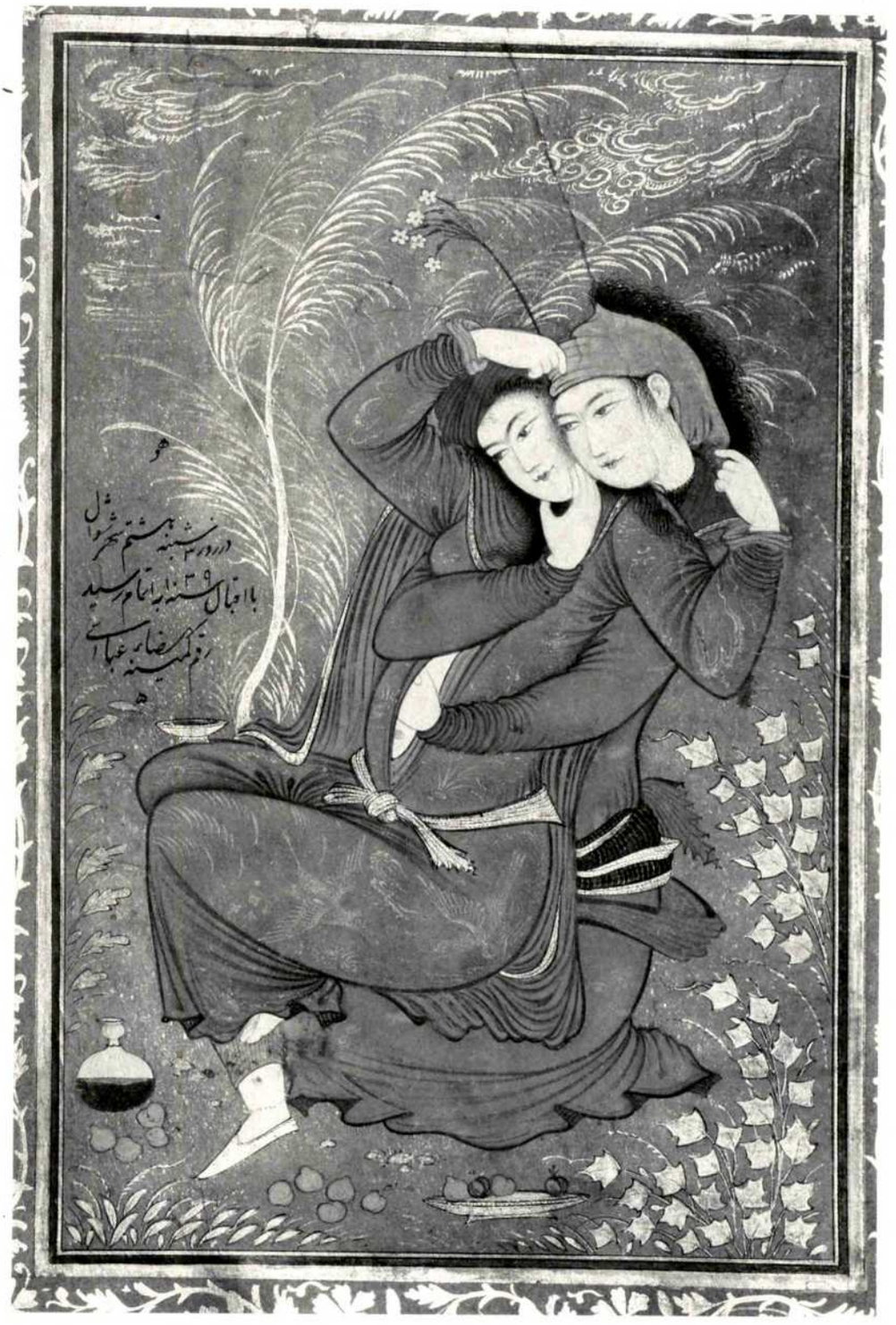

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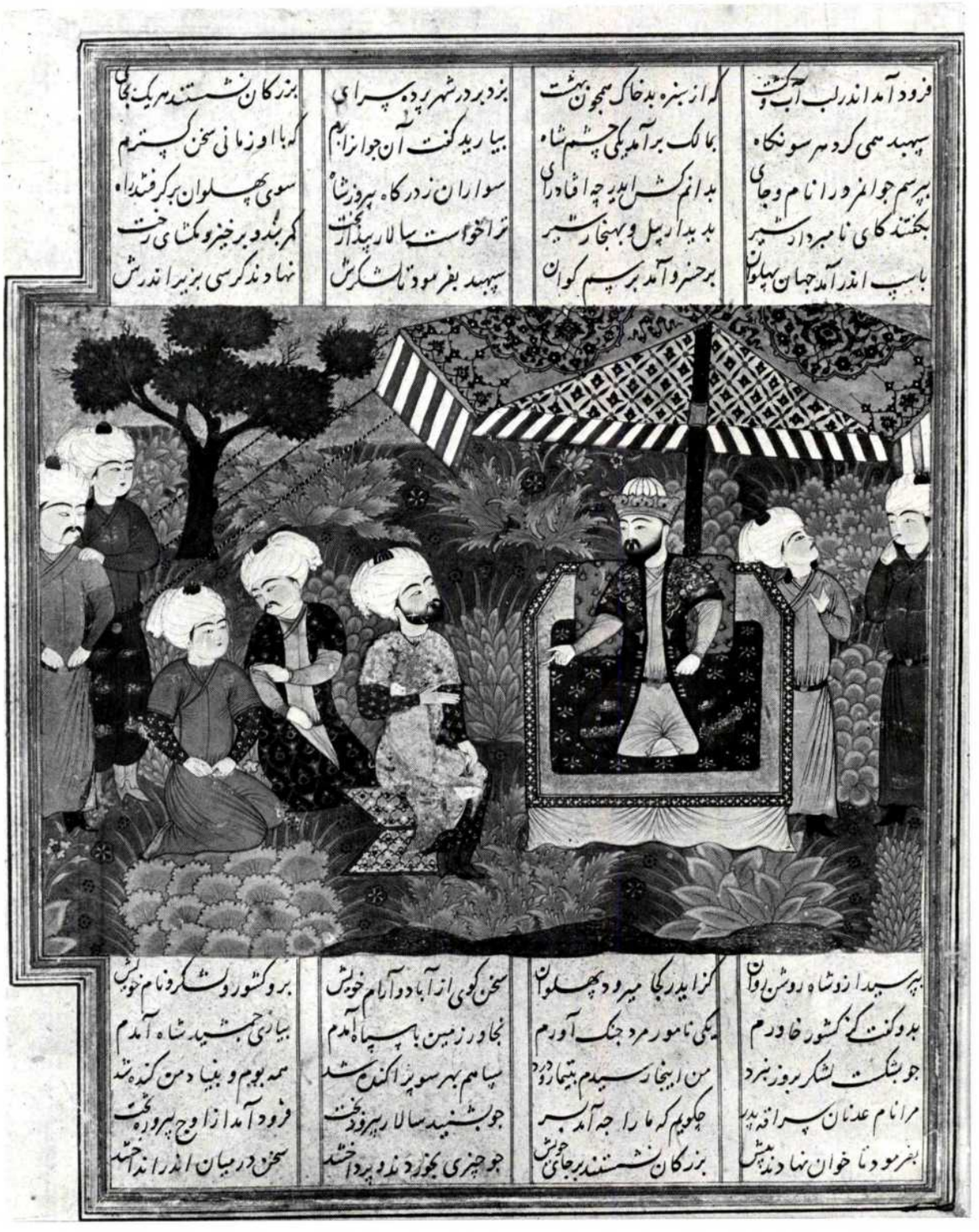

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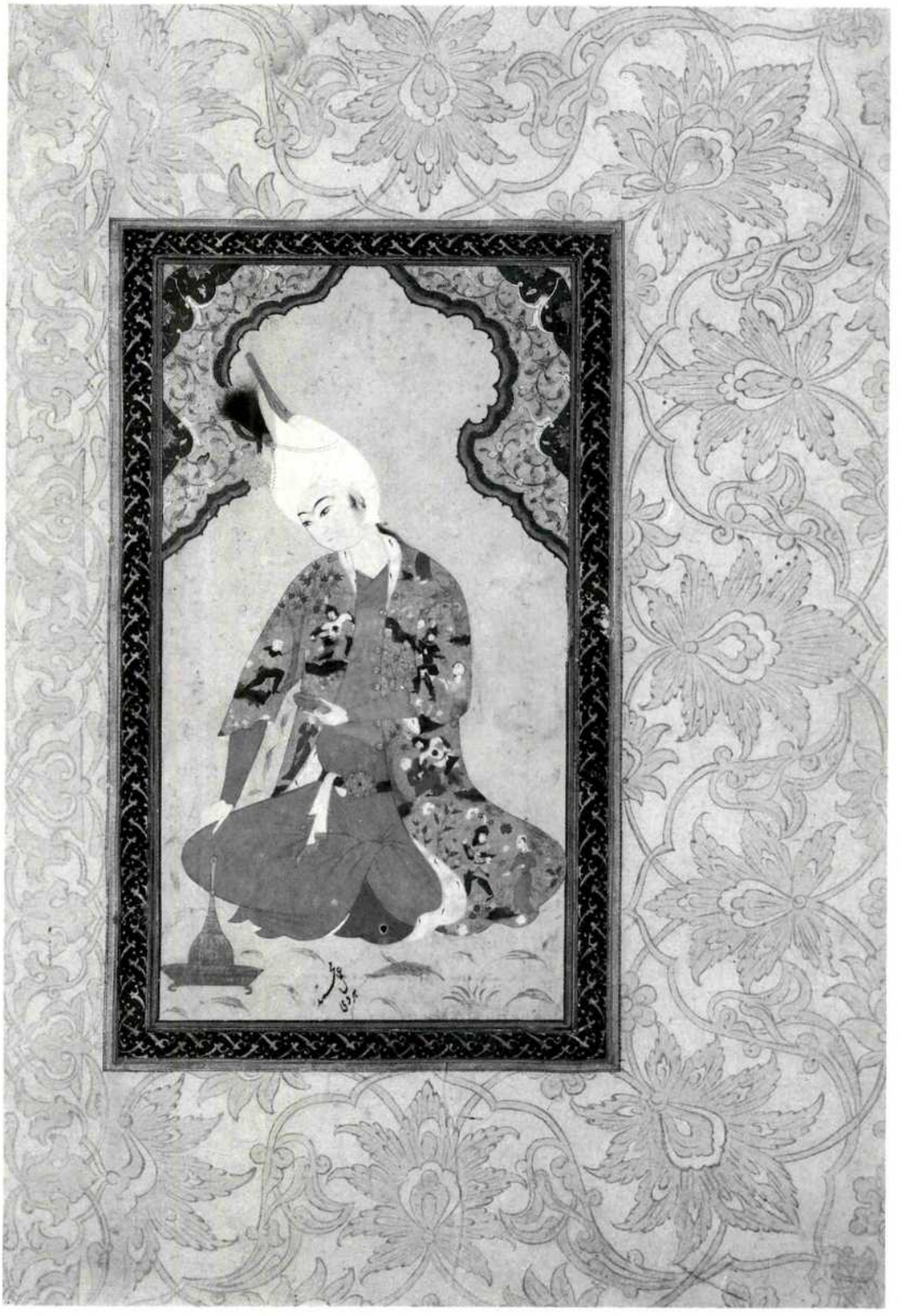

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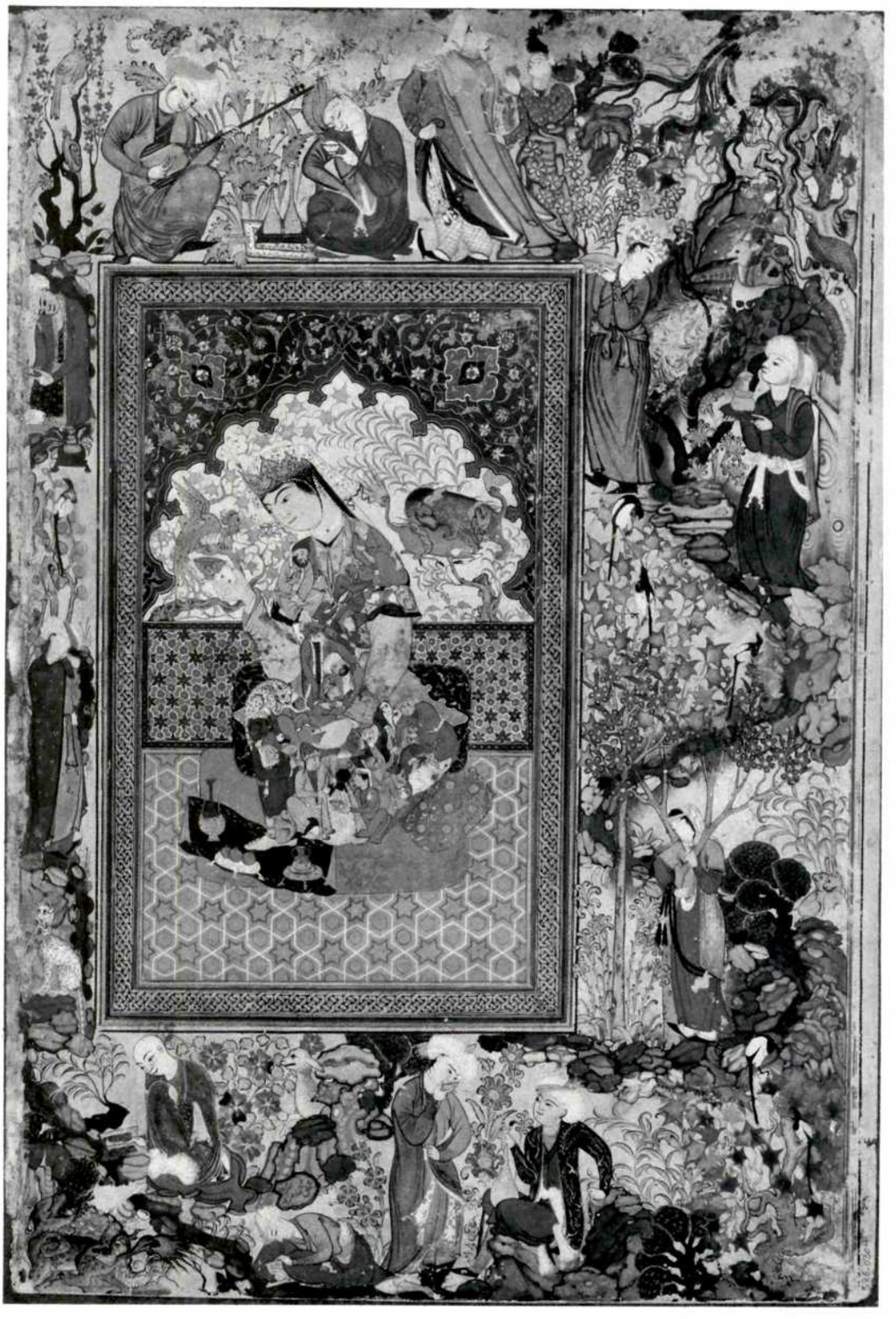

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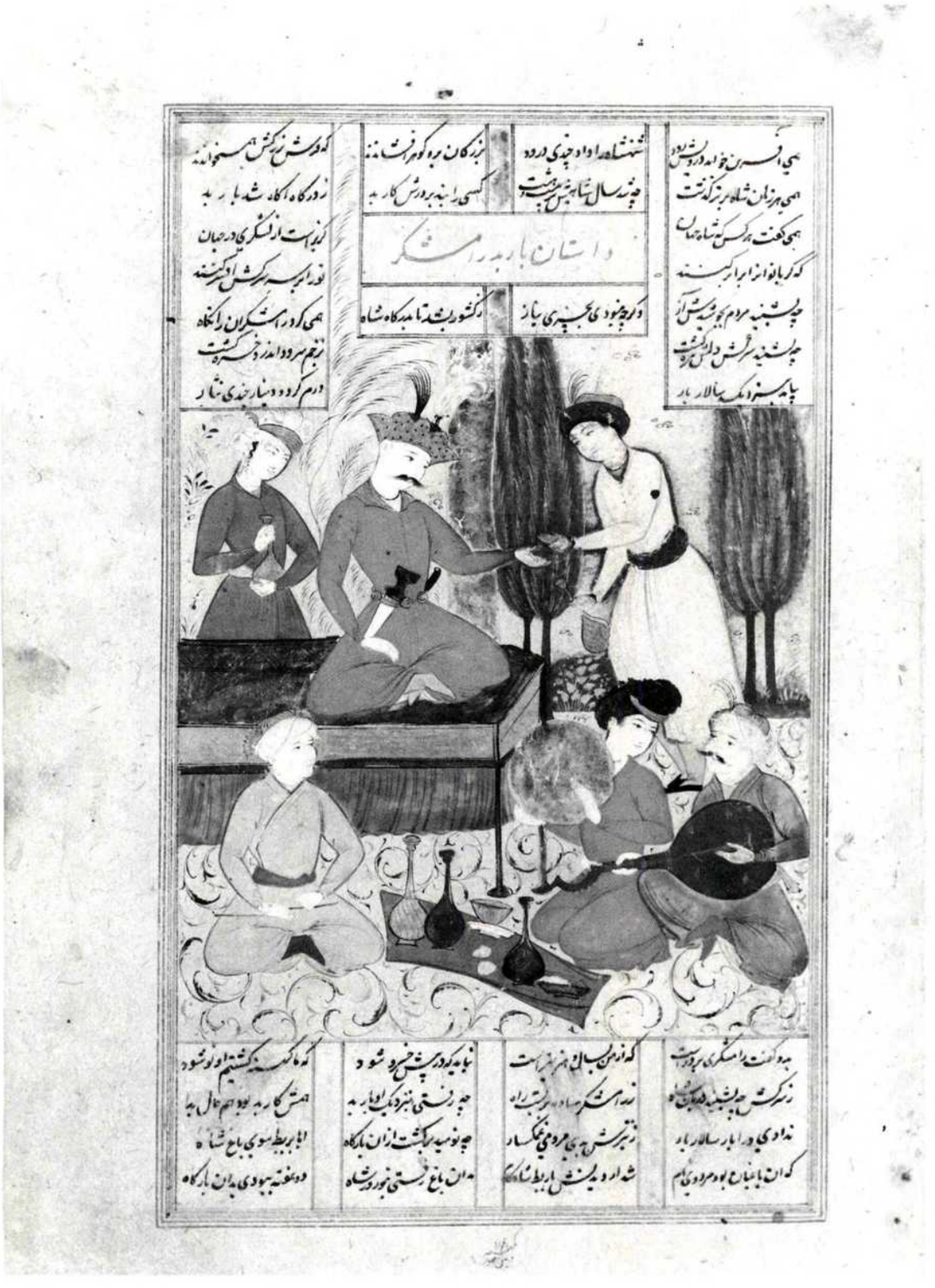

"Bahram Gur and courtiers," signed "Mu'in Musavvir" (Shahnameh of Firdausi). Second half of the 17th century, Isfahan. Opaque watercolour and ink on paper. 27.3 x 16 cm The Brooklyn Museum, Museum Purchase, 34.6012.

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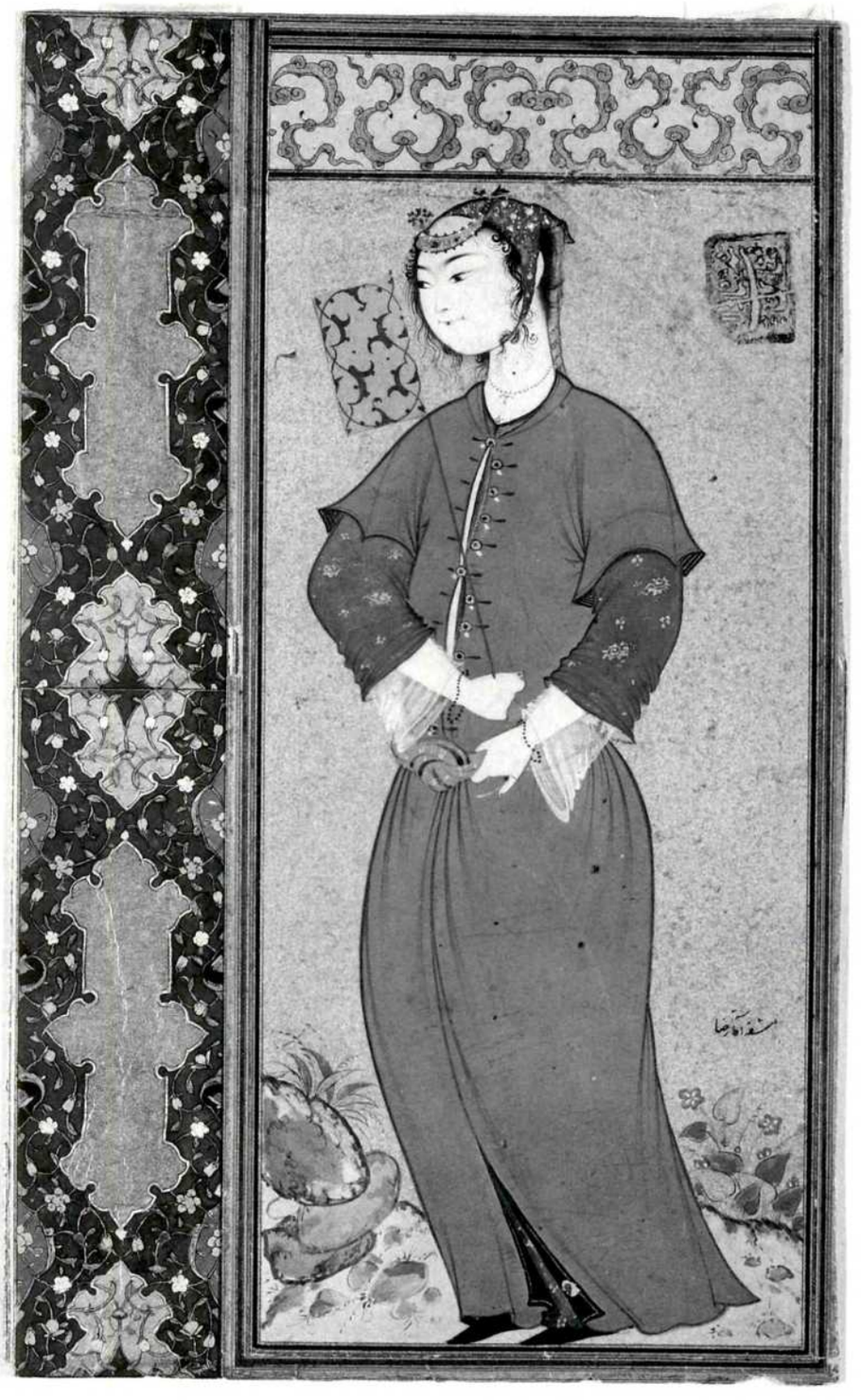

ıan with a fan," signed "Aqa Riza." c. 1587, Iran.
ıe water-colour and gold on paper. 16.1 x 9.8 cm.
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"Four figures under a tree." 15th century, Herat. Opaque water-colour on silk. The al-Sabah Collection, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait National Museum, LNS 77 MS.

Marg

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Painters of Persia and their Art

Volume XLI No. 3

A MAGAZINE OF THE ARTS

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Cover: "Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna in discussion with a dervish," (*Makhzan al-Asrar* of Maulana Hydar). 985 (?)/1577-78 (?), Khurasan. Opaque water-colour, ink and gold on paper. 32.3 x 20.4 cm. (sheet), 17.5 x 9.2 cm. (image). Ex-Monif and Vever Collections, Courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, S86.0054, fol. 26A.

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I am also grateful to Pratapaditya Pal, Senior Curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, for proposing that I edit this volume.

I wish to express my gratitude to Francesca Galloway and Simon Ray of Spink and Son Ltd., London, Shaykha Hussa al-Sabah and Ghada Qaddumi of the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah, Kuwait National Museum, and Edmund de Unger for their generous response to my request for photographs.

Finally, I must thank the contributors who have produced thought-provoking articles of the highest calibre despite the many responsibilities of their busy careers. By their efforts they have enriched the body of knowledge and shed new light on some of the world's greatest artists, the painters of Persia.

Sheila R. Canby
London

Introduction

Sheila R. Canby

"It is etched on the minds of the masters of the arcane that the garden of painting and illumination is an orchard of perfect adornment. . . ."

Dust Muhammad, Preface to the Bahram Mirza Album, from W. M. Thackston, *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge, MA, 1989), p. 343.

In the West the study of art history, and painting in particular, has traditionally centred on individual artists and their schools. From Vasari to Berenson, scholars have sought to define the art of specific places and times in terms of known artists and their followers. Even when the identity of a painter is unknown, scholars have satisfied the desire to name those responsible for great works of art by calling them the "Master of" a particular painting or workshop. Perhaps in reaction to the emphasis on the attribution of works of art, art historians more recently have turned their attention to the social and political context in which works of art were produced. However, one can still argue that the individual artist remains the prime determinant in how a work will look and how it will differ from works by other artists of the same period and locale.

The supremacy of calligraphy over painting in Arab and Iranian culture has resulted in Persian biographers concentrating more on calligraphers than on painters. Nonetheless, the accounts of several biographers—Mirza Muhammad Haydar Dughlat, Dust Muhammad, Qadi Ahmad, Sadiqi Beg, Iskandar Beg Munshi (see Further Reading)—contain enough information on the artists of the Timurid (1370-1506) and Safavid (1501-1732) periods to provide modern art historians with some of the tools necessary for attributing works to specific artists and for connecting the verbal descriptions of the artists in the sources with their visual output.

The present volume is only the most recent link in the chain of accounts and analyses devoted to Persian painters and their *oeuvre.* In this century art historians have increasingly refined the definitions of schools and styles of Persian painting as more paintings have come to light. Without the groundwork laid by scholars such as F. R. Martin, Eric Schroeder, Ivan Stchoukine, Basil Gray, B. W. Robinson, Stuart Cary Welch, Eleanor Sims and Ernst Grube, to name a few, our knowledge of the

identities and works of individual Persian artists would be scanty. Whether one confirms or questions the judgements of these authorities, one cannot avoid referring to their books and articles. As a glance at the notes of each article in this volume attests, the work of the aforementioned scholars is the springboard for much of what is discussed here. Nevertheless, the writers of the articles in this issue not only present a fresh look at painters previously considered elsewhere but also draw new conclusions concerning them.

Textual information on Persian painters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is sparse and often difficult to match with existing works of art. Thus, as B. W. Robinson demonstrates in his article on Pir Ahmad Baghshimali, the case for the artist must be made by painstakingly examining the manuscripts which could be expected to contain paintings by the artist. From a reconstruction of hallmarks in the artist's life Robinson convincingly identifies a body of work attributable to Pir Ahmad Baghshimali.

The study of later fifteenth-century artists is both enhanced and confused by a larger number of literary references and extant works, a fair number of which bear signatures or attributions. The inscription "Muhammad Siyah Qalam" on a large, varied group of fifteenth-century paintings has resulted in the false assumption that an individual artist was responsible for all these paintings. As J. M. Rogers shows, "Siyah Qalam" is more fittingly used as a descriptive term for a particular technique or in its broadest interpretation for a body of late fifteenth-century Persian paintings. Likewise, Bihzad, the most renowned of late fifteenth-century Persian painters, has suffered from too much fame and admiration. Attributions to him abound, but exceedingly few works are universally accepted as his. Progressing beyond knotty questions of attribution, Thomas Lentz treats Bihzad as the paradigm of the new style of painting that developed in the late fifteenth century but whose influence was felt well into the sixteenth century in both Iran and India.

The Houghton Shahnameh by Martin B. Dickson and Stuart Cary Welch (Cambridge, MA, 1981) is the most thorough attempt to identify the artists active at the court of the Safavid Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-76) and to define and differentiate their styles. The reinterpretation of information brought to light by Dickson and Welch or connected with their subject forms the basis of Priscilla Soucek's most enlightening article on Sultan Muhammad.

The problems associated with late sixteenth-and seventeenth-century Persian painters differ markedly from those one encounters with earlier artists. While the literary sources may not reveal much more about these figures than they did about their earlier counterparts, many more signed works are extant. Thus, in my article on Riza in this issue I could base my discussion of one aspect of the artist's personal iconography on a range of works spanning a forty-year period.

Over the three centuries to which the painters considered here belong, the style and subject-matter of Persian painting changed dramatically. The early artists emerge from their cloak of anonymity only with the most patient art-historical coaxing, aided by a careful review of the literary and historical sources. With the increasing appearance of signatures and, more often, attributions in late fifteenth-century painting, problems of authenticity loom large. While connoisseurship remains an important aspect of defining the style of Safavid artists, their lives and characters are relatively well-documented. Thus, scholars aim for precise identification of the patrons for whom and places in which these artists worked. With later Safavid artists one is confronted

with a more extensive body of work and a greater range of subject-matter than in the *oeuvre* of earlier painters. Thus, one must ask a different set of questions about why such-and-such an artist painted such-and-such a picture. Despite the various dictates that the study of each period or school presents, the individuals who peopled these times and ateliers remain of paramount importance. No matter how influential a patron or a milieu, the unique, human element of painting resides first in the hands of the painter. The collection of Persian painters presented here is truly a garden of perfect adornment, each artist as fruitful and stimulating as the next.

NB Transliteration from Arabic, Persian, and Turkish has been left to contributors so that systems are consistent within each article but vary from one article to the next. Technical limitations have resulted in the omission of diacritical marks.

"Zenith of his Time": The Painter Pir Ahmad Baghshimali

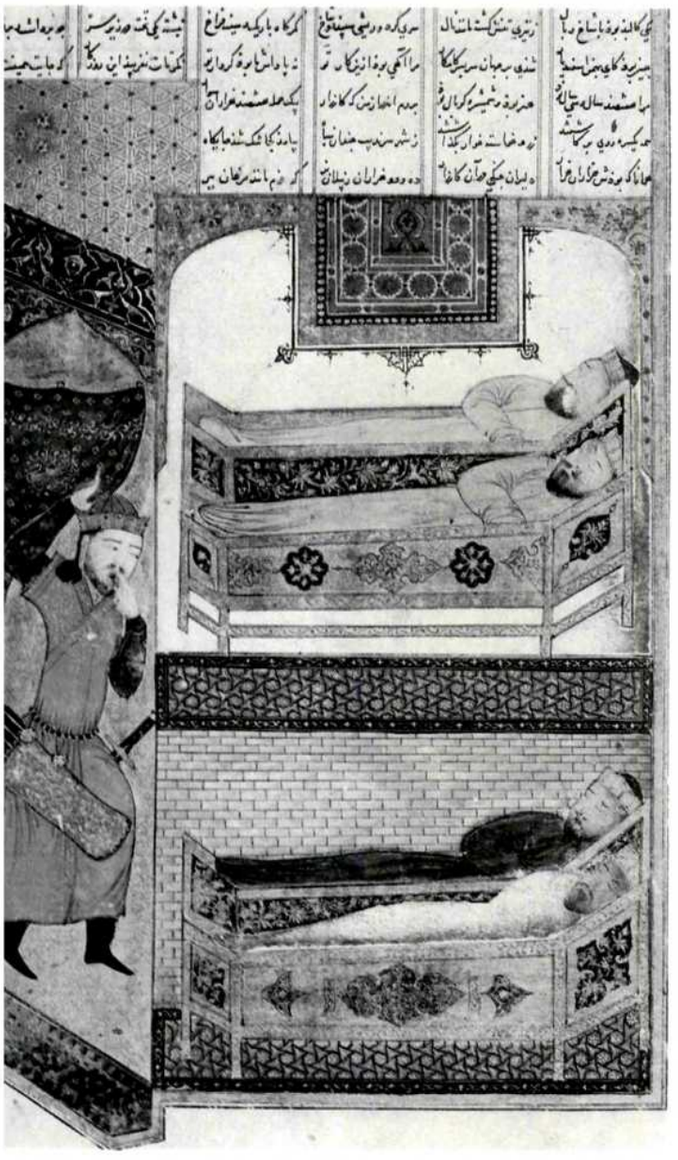
To the memory of Eric Schroeder

B.W. Robinson

Throughout the first two centuries of the history of Persian painting, the student is confronted on the one hand with an exceptionally rich and varied range of original material, and on the other with a painfully meagre sprinkling of literary references, sometimes of dubious credibility and often confined to fulsome but uninformative eulogy. It was not till the end of the Timurid period that the artists began to make a practice of signing their work (very rarely at first) and the writers to retail biographical and circumstantial information in reasonable quantity.

In the earlier period, then, faced with a mass of paintings and little more than a handful of names, we can either follow the cautious scholar in disregarding the latter and treating all the material as anonymous, or we can take the bolder course of attempting to correlate certain groups of paintings with certain names to which a few scraps of information have become attached, and which seem to fit the paintings in question. This latter procedure is certainly the more attractive, though dealing largely in hypothesis, because the impact of a painting is considerably enhanced if we can associate it with some definite painter whose career and character the literary sources enable us, however dimly, to envisage; and we can thus put a human face on what might otherwise become a dry exercise in art-historical technique. The present article attempts to deal in this way with the problematical painter Pir Ahmad Baghshimali. It will thus follow the lead of Eric Schroeder (to whom we shall return before long), who wrote: "I regard it as desirable to embrace Dust Muhammad's all-important account of early painting, and the monuments of early painting, in a hypothetical structure which may be subjected to test or improvement. And I regard it as convenient to associate a peculiar group of first-rank paintings with the name of an artist, even though the association be only probable, in the radical meaning of the word."[1]

Our literary sources on Pir Ahmad Baghshimali are of the slenderest. They are, in fact, confined to a brief statement by Dust Muhammad in his preface to the album of Bahram Mirza (Topkapi, H. 2154): "Another [pupil of Shams al-Din] was Pir Ahmad Baghshimali, the zenith of his time. No one could rival him. He reached the age of fifty."[2] But this bald statement may be augmented by judicious deduction. In Dust Muhammad's text it is sandwiched between, on the one hand, notices of 'Abd al-Hayy and Junayd, senior pupils of Shams al-Din at the court of Sultan Ahmad Jalayr in the



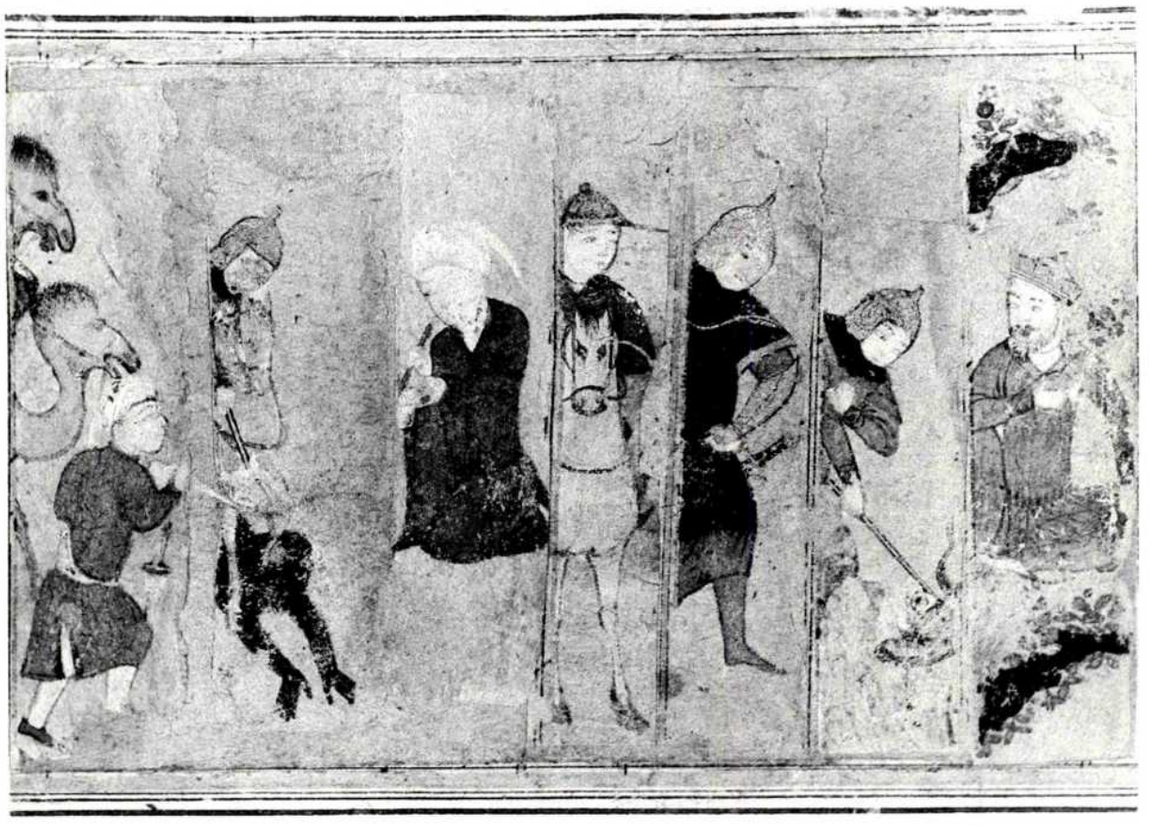
ıhman in Rustam's family vault." 1397. The British Library, n, Or. 2780, fol. 171b.

3. "A warrior on Mount Damavand." 1397. The British Library, London, Or. 2780, fol. 213.

ırshasp visiting the ıans." 1397. The British y, London, Or. 2780, b.

1390s, and, on the other, an account of how Baysunghur Mirza gathered his library staff in the 1420s. In the interval thus left, *c.* 1400-20 (and Dust Muhammad's account is chronological), the only prince we can envisage as patronizing "the zenith of his time" is surely the short-lived (1384-1414) Iskandar Sultan b. 'Umar Shaykh; he was Timur's wayward grandson and one of the most lavish and discerning patrons in the history of Persian painting. The placing of Dust Muhammad's statement on him must therefore imply the probability that Pir Ahmad worked for Iskandar Sultan, a conclusion reached by Schroeder on the same grounds.

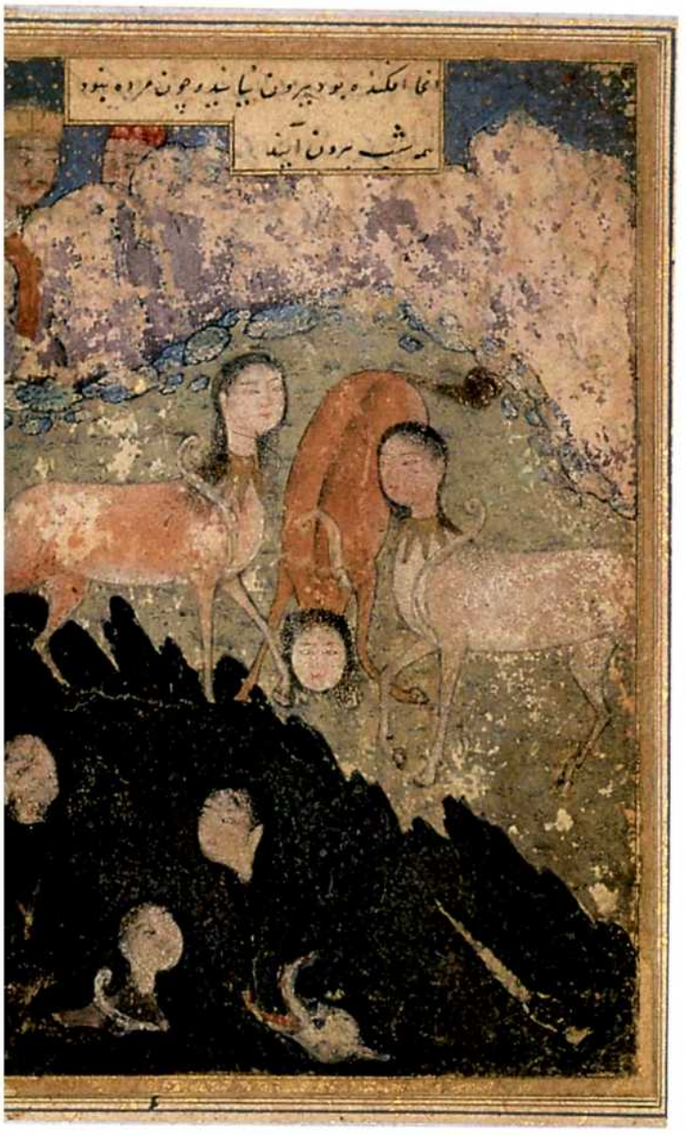
Pir Ahmad's sobriquet, Baghshimali, may also perhaps provide a clue to further information. In 1397, as we are informed by Timur's fawning biographer Sharaf al-Din



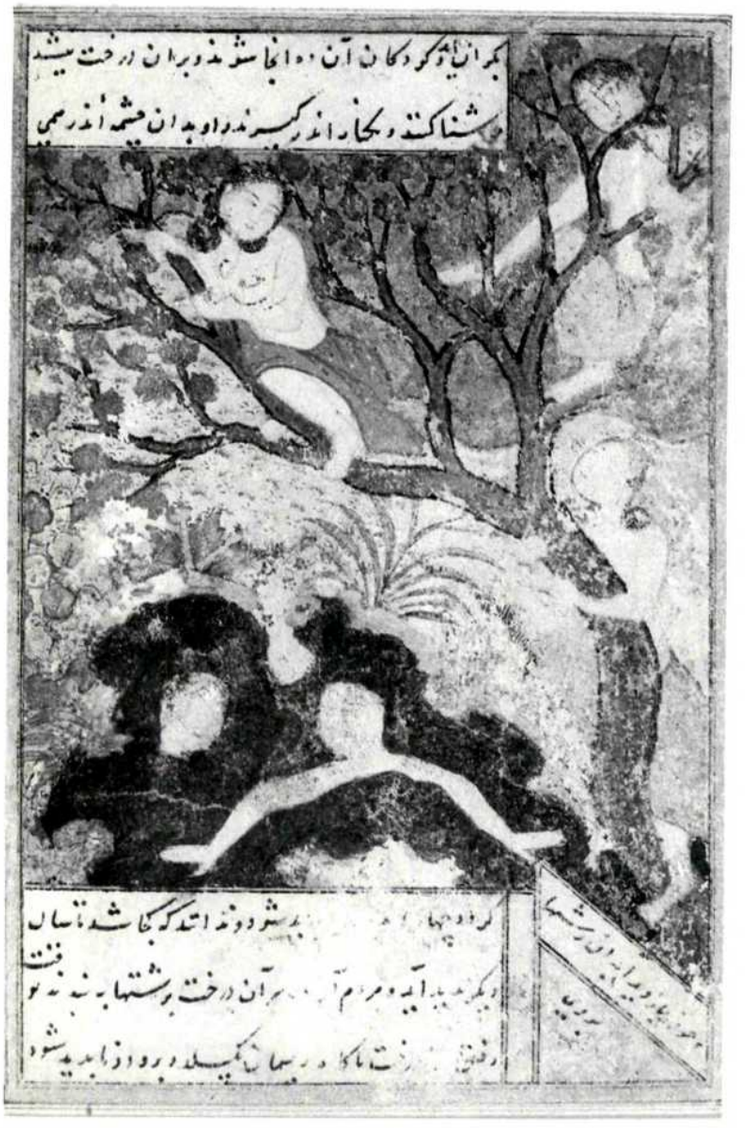
4. Mounted fragments of marginal paintings. *c.* 1405. The British Museum, London, 1958-7-12-025.

Yazdi,[3] the great conquerer built a palace surrounded with gardens to the north of Samarkand. It was named Bagh-i Shimal (Northern Garden), and was dedicated to his granddaughter Baghisi Sultan, daughter of Mirza Miranshah, whom Iskandar Sultan had married the previous year. The walls were lavishly adorned with paintings by "the most skilful painters from Persia and Baghdad," which the writer declares were far superior to the works of the legendary Mani and to the murals in the Chinese imperial palace. The subjects of these paintings, as we learn from Ibn 'Arabshah, a less flattering biographer,[4] were court scenes, hunts, battles, and portraits. They were in effect, as Stchoukine points out, simply enlarged miniatures, like those executed for Shah 'Abbas at Isfahan two centuries later.

The coincidence of the artist's sobriquet with the name of the palace[5] is too striking and unusual to be fortuitous, and we may well be justified in inferring that he was one of the painters—perhaps even the leading painter—employed on the murals, although his senior, 'Abd al-Hayy, seems to have been in charge of the whole operation. Probably not long afterwards the latter became a religious recluse and destroyed as many of his own works as he could lay his hands on, as related by Mirza Haydar Dughlat.[6] This would have left Pir Ahmad Baghshimali at the head of his profession, and it would not be surprising if Iskandar Sultan's keen artistic perception quickly picked him out as a brilliant recruit to his *kitab-khana* (royal library *cum* artists' workshop). To whom else would he go? Timur had finished building and, being illiterate (as Ibn 'Arabshah tells us), was not interested in fine illuminated manuscripts; Shah Rukh had literary tastes, chiefly in the direction of history, but his artistic inclinations, so far as



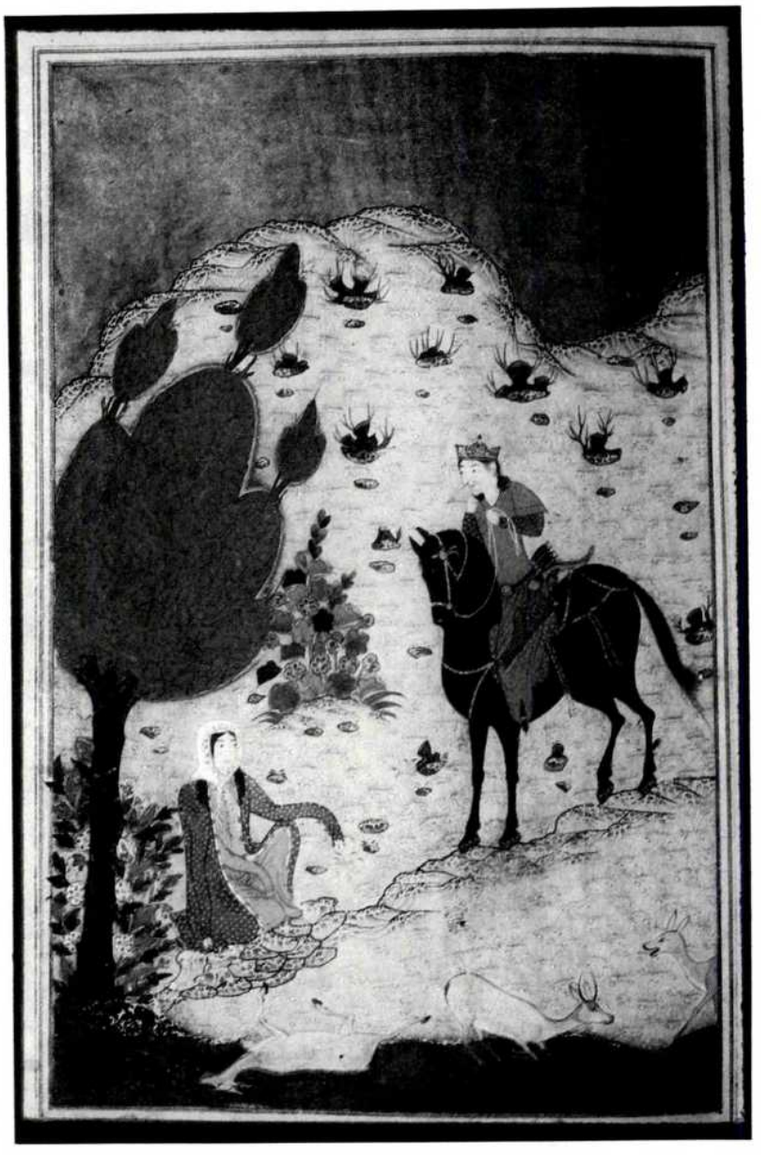
ıe sirens on the sea-shore observed by Iskandar." *c.* 1405.
· d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva (Donation Pozzi).



6. "The magic spring." *c.* 1405. Private Collection.

we can judge, were not pronounced; and Baysunghur Mirza was still a mere infant (b. 1400; the earliest manuscript dedicated to him seems to be the historical manual *Tabaqat i Nasiri* of 814/1412).[7]

There is reason to believe that Pir Ahmad entered the service of Shah Rukh after the fall of Iskandar Sultan in 1414. A magnificent manuscript compendium of Hafiz-i Abru's historical writings (Topkapi, B. 282)[8] contains miniatures apparently by him, together with a dedication to Shah Rukh (fol. 10a) and two chronograms giving the dates 818/1415 (fol. 296a) and 819/1416 (fol. 652a). These may have constituted his last work, and if we accept Dust Muhammad's statement that he lived till the age of fifty, we may suppose that he was born *c.* 1370. He would thus have been in the prime of life when the Bagh-i Shimal palace was built and decorated. His work strongly influenced that of Baysunghur's academy.

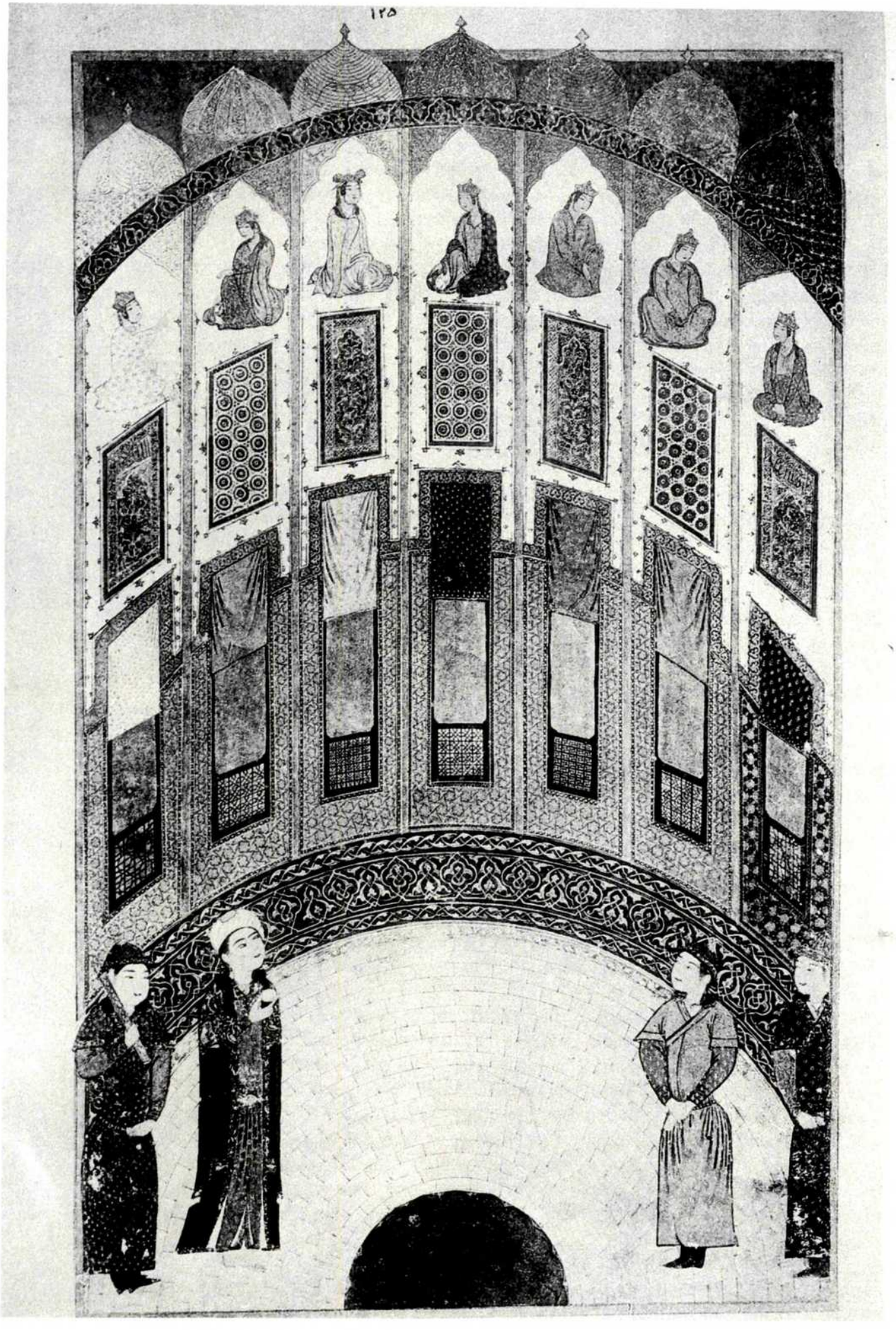


7. "The prince encountering a lady by a stream." 1408. Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul, H. 796, fol. 75a.

8. "Adam and Eve." 1410. Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, LA 1617.

So the points we have established, as possibilities, are:
(i) Born *c.* 1370, Pir Ahmad became a pupil of Shams al-Din at Baghdad under Sultan Ahmad Jalayr; his senior fellow-pupils were 'Abd al-Hayy and Junayd.[9]
(ii) When Timur took Baghdad in 1393 Pir Ahmad was probably transported, along with 'Abd al-Hayy, to Samarkand, where it is likely that he contributed to the murals in the Bagh-i Shimal palace in 1397.
(iii) After Timur's death (1405), or perhaps before, he entered the *kitab-khana* of Iskandar Sultan, in which he became the dominant figure.
(iv) After the fall of Iskandar (1414) he enjoyed the patronage of Shah Rukh, and died *c.* 1420.

9. "Bahram Gur and the portraits of the Seven Princesses." 1410. Gulbenkia Foundation, Lisbon, LA 161



Pir Ahmad Baghshimali has hardly been noticed by Western writers. Eric Schroeder is the only one who has attempted to match Dust Muhammad's encomium with an actual surviving painting, namely the fine miniature of Rustam and his bride Tahmina in the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University.[10] This is certainly a feasible proposition, but unfortunately Schroeder goes on to attribute to him the miniatures in the Tehran *Kalila wa Dimna*, then (1942) generally accepted as an early fifteenth-century manuscript, but since regarded as a product of the patronage of the Black Sheep Turkman prince Pir Budaq, some fifty years later.[11] Pir Ahmad is mentioned neither by Binyon, Wilkinson and Gray (except in their Appendix I, which gives a translation of Dust Muhammad's preface), nor by Gray in his Skira book of 1961, and Stchoukine (1954) mentions him only in brushing aside Schroeder's hypothesis ("L'attribution . . . faite sans raison valable" and "l'hypothèse de l'auteur américain ne saurait être acceptée à moins de nouvelle preuve").[12] But Schroeder had more real insight into Persian painting than many of his contemporaries, and was not afraid of publishing his opinions; in the present instance his hypothesis, so far as it goes, is quite tenable. In a case of this kind definite proof is not, and probably never will be, possible, and definite proof is, of course, what is required by the cautious scholar before he will commit himself in any way.

Bearing in mind the points established above, let us now look at the surviving works we are inclined to attribute to Pir Ahmad Baghshimali on grounds of style. The style we associate with him is directly derived from the Jalayrid school of Baghdad, to which it conforms in most respects. But in the hands of Pir Ahmad the slim attenuated figures, so characteristic of the work of 'Abd al-Hayy and Junayd, become shorter and fuller, the faces in particular being full and rounded. His compositions are not as large and crowded as those of his Baghdad associates. His treatment is generally original and always effective. He occasionally displays a quiet sense of humour, and he has a curious idiosyncrasy of placing the crowns on the heads of princes at a slight angle.

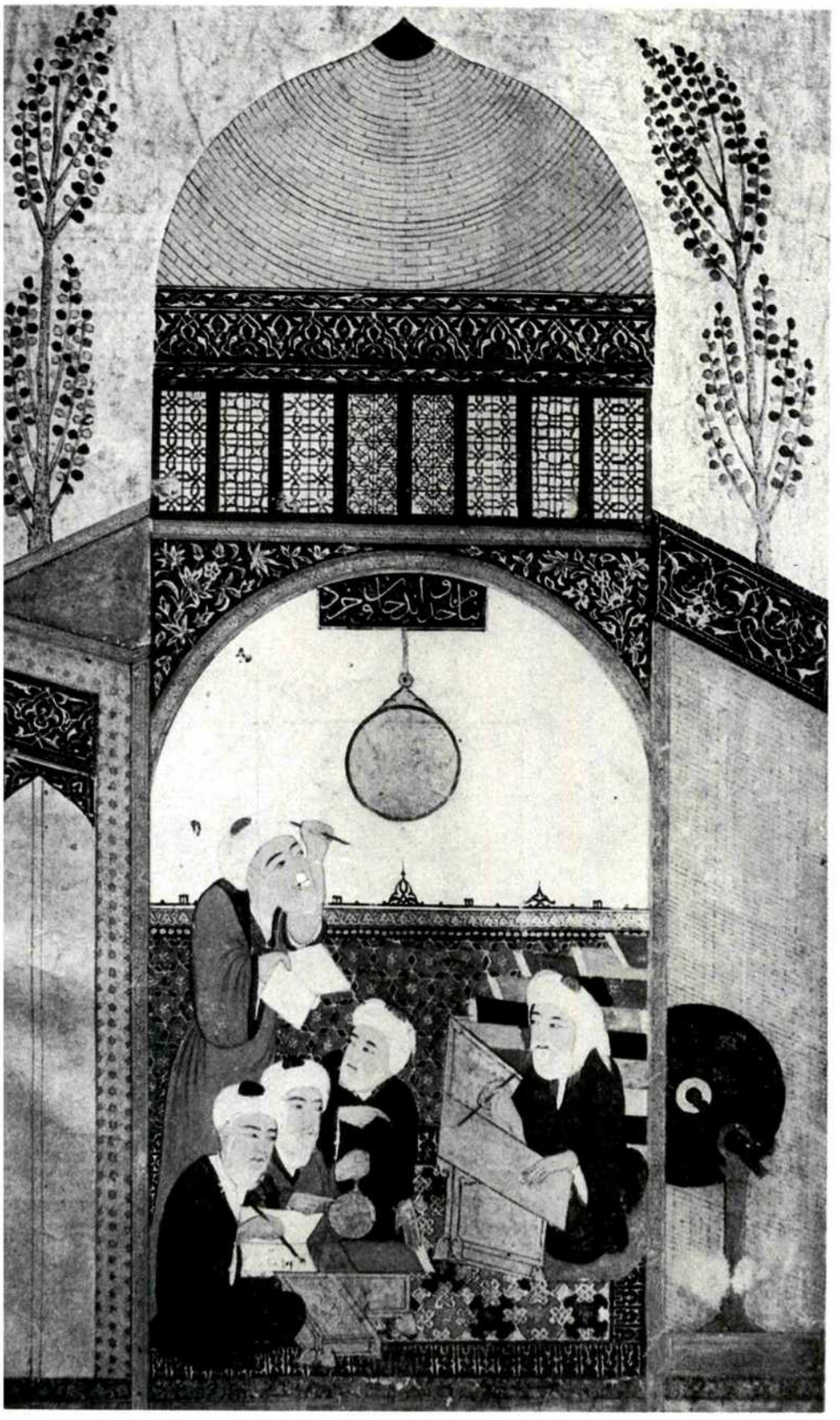
1

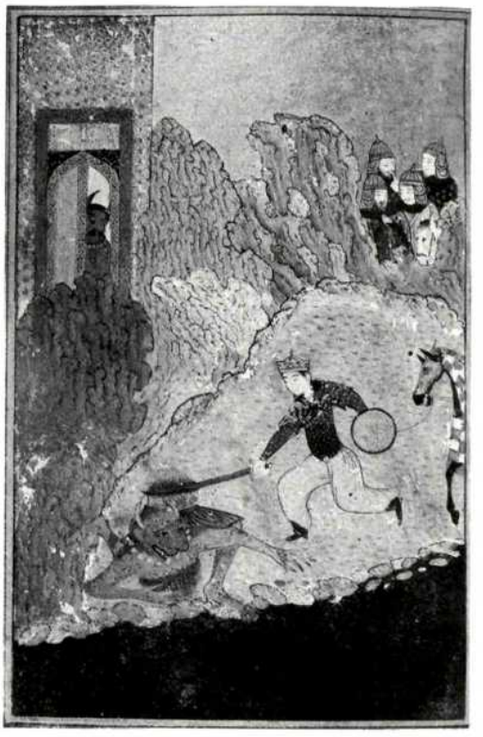
800/1397 (Shiraz). Two volumes of epics: (i) The *Garshasp Nama* and others, British Library, Or. 2780, with 11 miniatures; and (ii) The *Shahnama*, Chester Beatty Library, MS 114, with 5 miniatures. These volumes were formerly in the possession of the Comte de Gobineau; Schroeder claimed that they formed part of Timur's library. 25.4 x 16.5 cm.[13] (Figs. 1, 2, 3).

Iskandar Sultan was at Shiraz 1394-99, deputizing as governor for his father 'Umar Shaykh; the type of illumination in these manuscripts (close gold arabesques, unoutlined) is a characteristic Shiraz feature going back to the Muzaffarids; the manuscripts themselves are of royal quality. It seems highly likely, then, that they were produced at Shiraz for the young prince, then a boy of thirteen. The miniatures appear to be the work of a single painter, and their style (including crowns set at an angle) suggests an attribution to Pir Ahmad. He has here broadened considerably the Jalayrid style in which he had been trained, perhaps as a result of recent work on the murals of the Bagh-i Shimal palace.

2

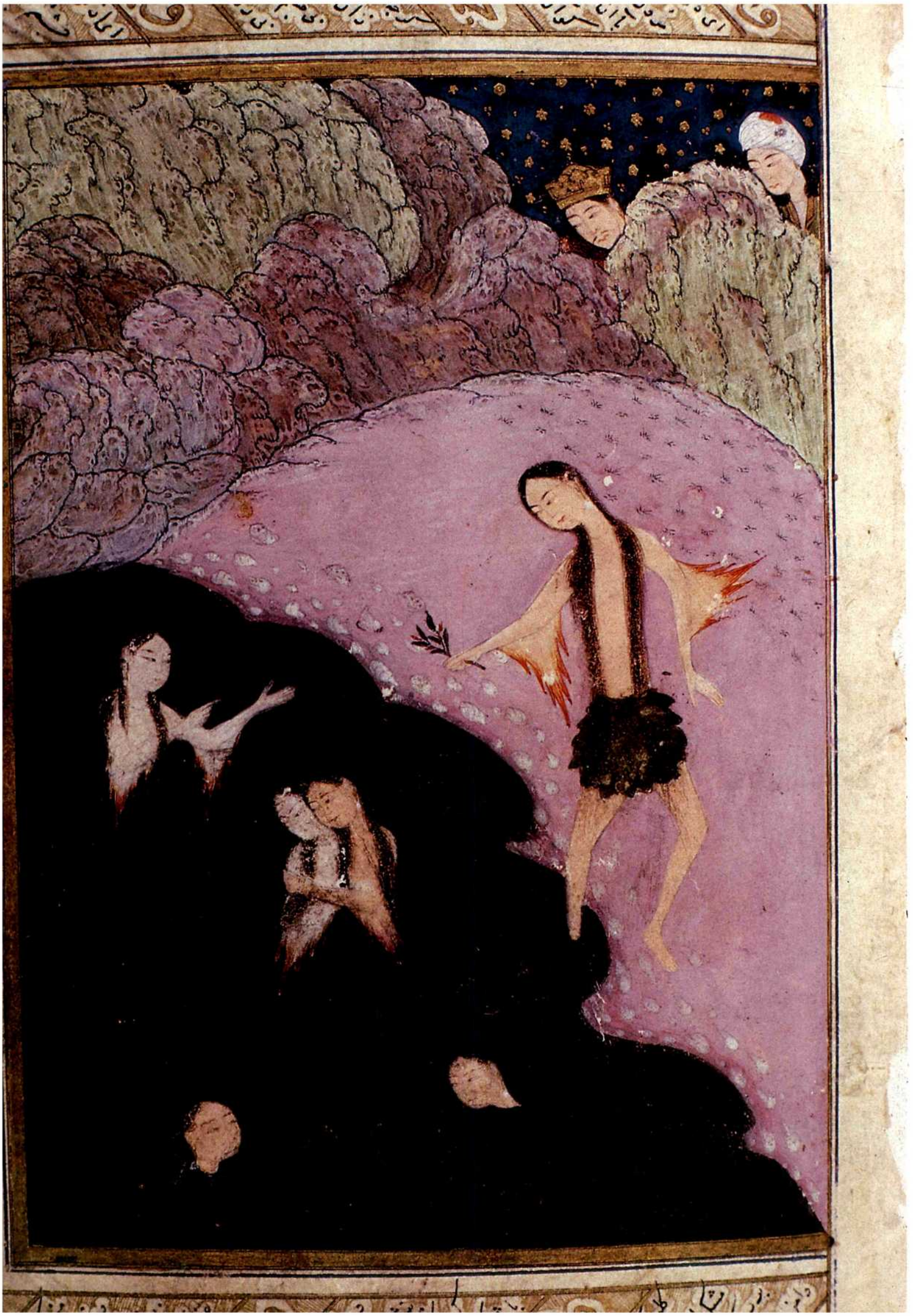
c. 1405 (Yazd?). *Iskandar Nama* of Nizami, a small pocket copy, fragmentary and badly damaged, British Museum, 1958-7-12-025, with 3 almost full-page miniatures and

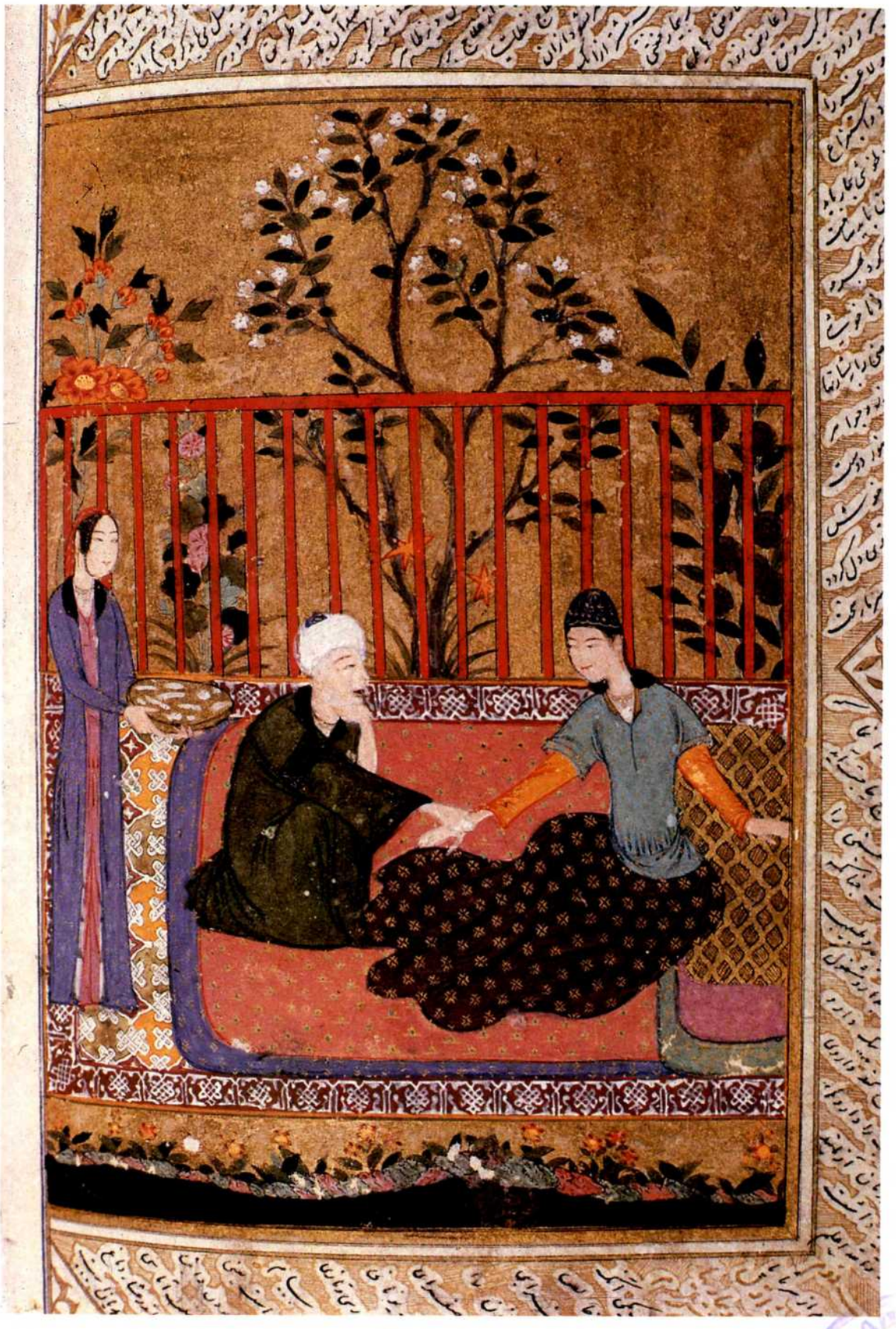




10. "Astronomers in the Maragha observatory." 1410. Istanbul University Library, F. 1418.

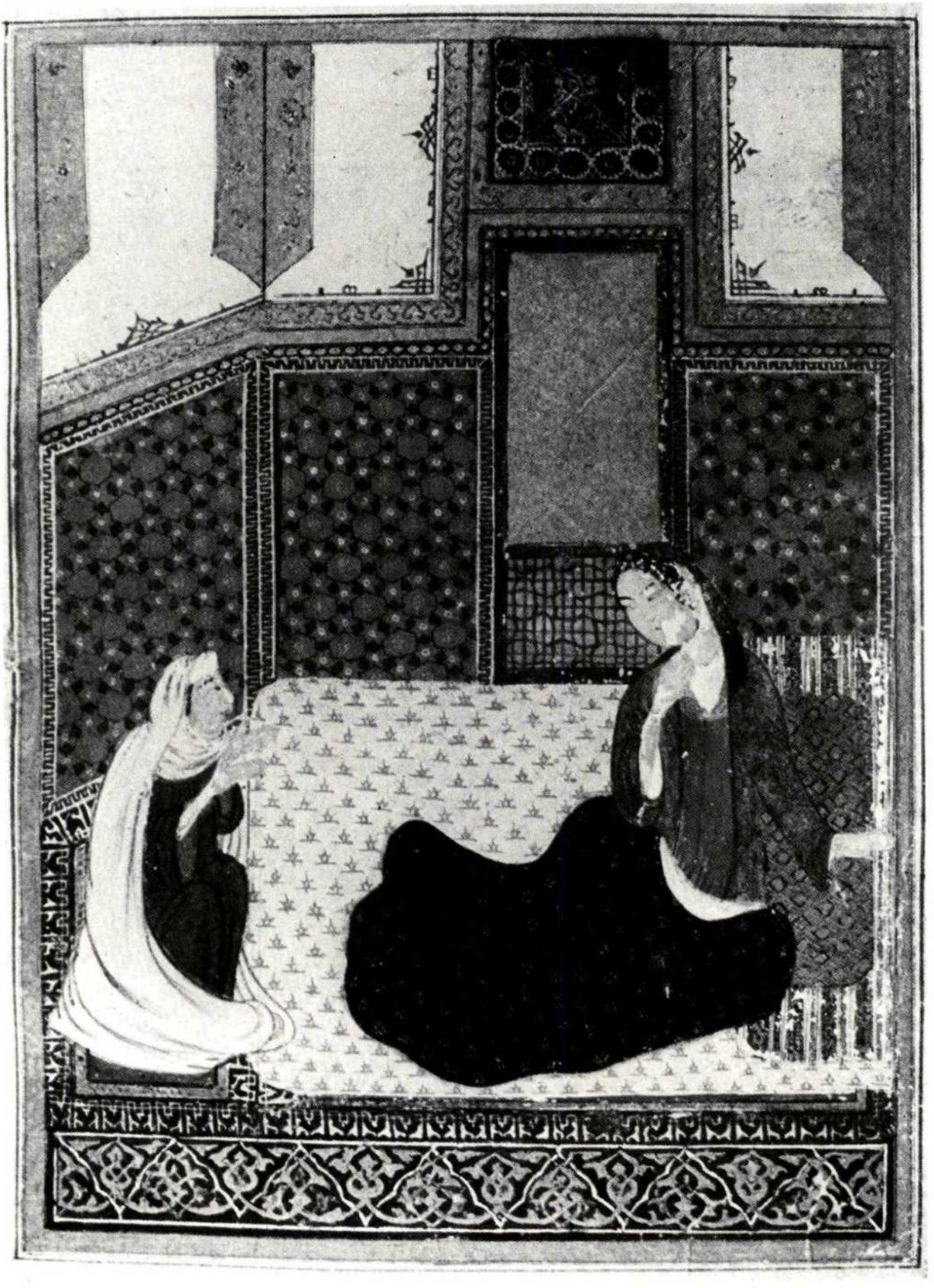
11. "Humay killing the demon-sorcerer." 1410-11. The British Library, London, Add. 27261, fol. 300a.



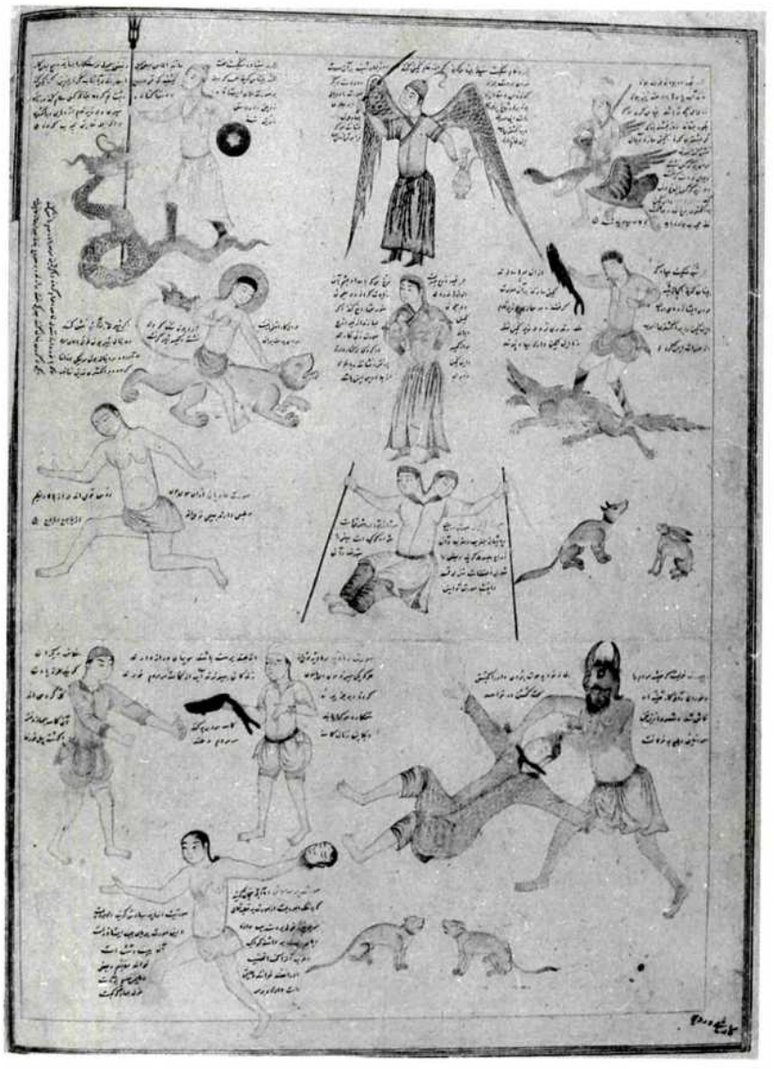


2. "The sirens on the shore bserved by Iskandar." 1410-11. he British Library, London, dd. 27261, fol. 286a.

3. "Physician and patient." 410-11. The British Library, ondon, Add. 27261, fol. 371b.



14. "The lady Hind receiving a message." *c.* 1412. Formerly in tl library of the Marques Bute, fol. 27b.



15. "Magical and astrological figures." 1413. Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, B. 411, fol. 159b.

more than 33 small ones in the outer margins (some of the latter separately mounted). Formerly in the collection of the late Mr J. C. French. 10 x 6.3 cm.[14] (Fig. 4).

The full-page paintings in this little volume are the work of a regular court painter, probably of the older generation, who evidently found it difficult to adjust himself to such a small scale. The small marginal miniatures, however, consisting usually of just one or two figures on a plain background, partially concealed by the text, are full of originality and wit. The way they are drawn and the crowns sometimes set at an angle, incline one to attribute them to Pīr Ahmad Baghshimali. A pocket anthology of the same period in the Malek Library, Tehran, MS 5932, contains similar little paintings, but they seem to be the work of a slightly inferior hand.

3

c. 1405 (Yazd?). *'Aja'ib al-Makhluqat* of Qazwini, another pocket volume of almost the same dimensions as the preceding one, from which only 3 detached miniatures are known to have survived. Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva (Donation Pozzi); and private collection. 8.8 x 5.6 cm.[15] (Figs. 5, 6).

The Geneva miniature representing the sirens on the sea-shore as centaurs, is the most remarkable and best preserved. In all 3, the originality of treatment and the drawing of the faces suggest the hand of Pir Ahmad.

4

810/1408 (Yazd). Anthology copied "at Yazd," where Iskandar Sultan was established at the time. Topkapi, H. 796, with 16 miniatures. 26 x 18 cm.[16] (Fig. 7).

At least three different artists were apparently employed on this manuscript, but five of the miniatures, on ff. 75a, 136b, 138a, 155b, and 170a, display the characteristics and style we have been associating with Pir Ahmad.

5

813/1410 (Shiraz?). Anthology, known as the Gulbenkian (formerly Yates Thompson) Anthology, Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, LA 1617, with 38 miniatures and a dedication to Iskandar Sultan. 27.3 x 17.8 cm.[17] (Figs. 8, 9).

This manuscript, the largest produced for Iskandar Sultan, was probably copied at Shiraz, and is rightly described by Sakisian as "un des plus anciens et des plus beaux manuscrits timurides." It suffered an appalling tragedy some years ago when the cellar in which it was stored became flooded, resulting in most of the colour being washed off the miniatures. As they have now been repainted, it is no longer possible to cite them as evidence in our present enquiry. But so far as one may judge from reproductions published before the disaster, several of the miniatures show the characteristics we are inclined to associate with Pir Ahmad. Especially notable are those of Bahram Gur in the chamber adorned with portraits of the Seven Princesses—a highly original conception of this subject, with characteristic figures—and Adam and Eve, with its breadth of treatment and large figures reminiscent of the epics of 1397. One can easily imagine the latter as a mural.

6

813/1410 (Shiraz). Horoscope of Iskandar Sultan, Wellcome Institute Library, London, with 1 magnificent double-page miniature depicting the circle of the heavens with the planets and signs of the zodiac in their positions at the birth of Iskandar Sultan in 1384.[18] A similar miniature, larger and perhaps rather later, is in the Topkapi album H.2154, ff. 164b, 165a.[19]

7

813/1410 (Shiraz). Astronomical work, Istanbul University Library, F. 1418, with 1 full-page miniature showing Nasr al-Din Tusi and his colleagues at work in the Maragha observatory.[20] The combination of originality of subject and characteristic figure drawing makes this a promising candidate for attribution to Pir Aḥmad. (Fig. 10).

8

813-14/1410-11 (Shiraz). Miscellany, British Library, Add. 27261, with 21 miniatures and some marginal drawings. Dedication to Iskandar Sultan. This is one of the manuscripts brought back by Sir John Malcolm, British Envoy at the court of Fath 'Ali Shah. 18.4 x 12.7 cm.[21] (Figs. 11, 12, 13).

The heterogeneous text of this celebrated manuscript has been described as a veritable pocket library, and the miniatures similarly provide a comprehensive survey of early

Timurid court painting; many of the compositions are found, with little or no modification, in various manuscripts throughout the ensuing century. Dr Stchoukine[22] detected the hands of at least five different artists in these paintings, but this seems unnecessarily divisive. They appear on the whole to be homogeneous and to display the qualities and characteristics that suggest the hand of Pir Ahmad. Towards the end of the volume a number of pages have their margins embellished with exquisite tinted drawings. The figures these contain lead to the conclusion that they too are the work of our artist, who thus established the practice originated by his first patron, Sultan Ahmad Jalayr, in his own *Diwan* of 1402, now in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington.

9

c. 1412 (Shiraz). Two *mathnawi* poems: (i) *Nawruz u Gul,* by the Shirazi poet Jalal Tabib; and (ii) *Bishr u Hind,* ascribed in the colophon to the otherwise unknown poet Khatir al-Din. 4 miniatures. Formerly in the library of the Marquess of Bute; present whereabouts unknown. 13 x 9 cm.[23] (Fig. 14).

The first of these poems was written in 1334, and was the prototype of a Turki version of the story by Lutfi, which was dedicated to Iskandar Sultan in 1412; this may well have been the occasion of the present manuscript being commissioned. The miniatures are relatively simple, and close parallels to them may be found in the British Library Miscellany (Figs. 11, 12, 13). They may thus be included in the group we have been associating with Pir Ahmad Baghshimali.

10

816/1413 (Isfahan). 28 folios of a large encyclopaedic work, copied "at Isfahan" and with a dedication to Iskandar Sultan, now bound into Topkapi album B.411.[24] (Fig. 15).

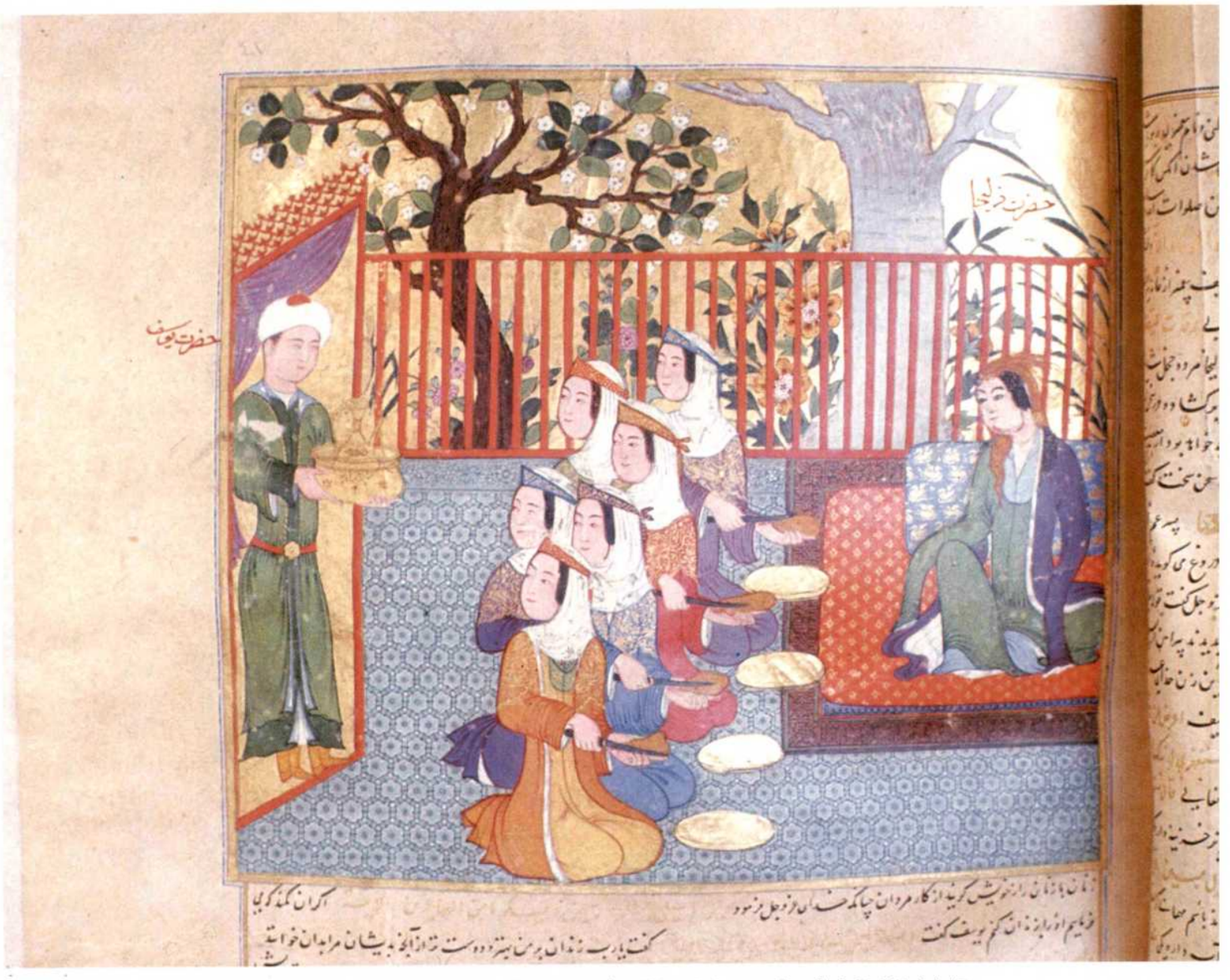
A page of tinted drawings, comprising 13 figures or groups, human and animal, magical and astrological (fol. 159b), is in the best court style of Iskandar Sultan, inviting attribution to Pir Ahmad (though there is a later Turkish attribution to a certain Shaykh Wardi). On folio 161b are three small drawings illustrating passages of verse; they are of high quality, but the style is more akin to that of Shiraz under Ibrahim Sultan. Other drawings, not attributable, are of a human skeleton (fol. 138b), a map of the world (ff. 141b, 142a), and a damaged *mi'raj* (fol. 160a).

11

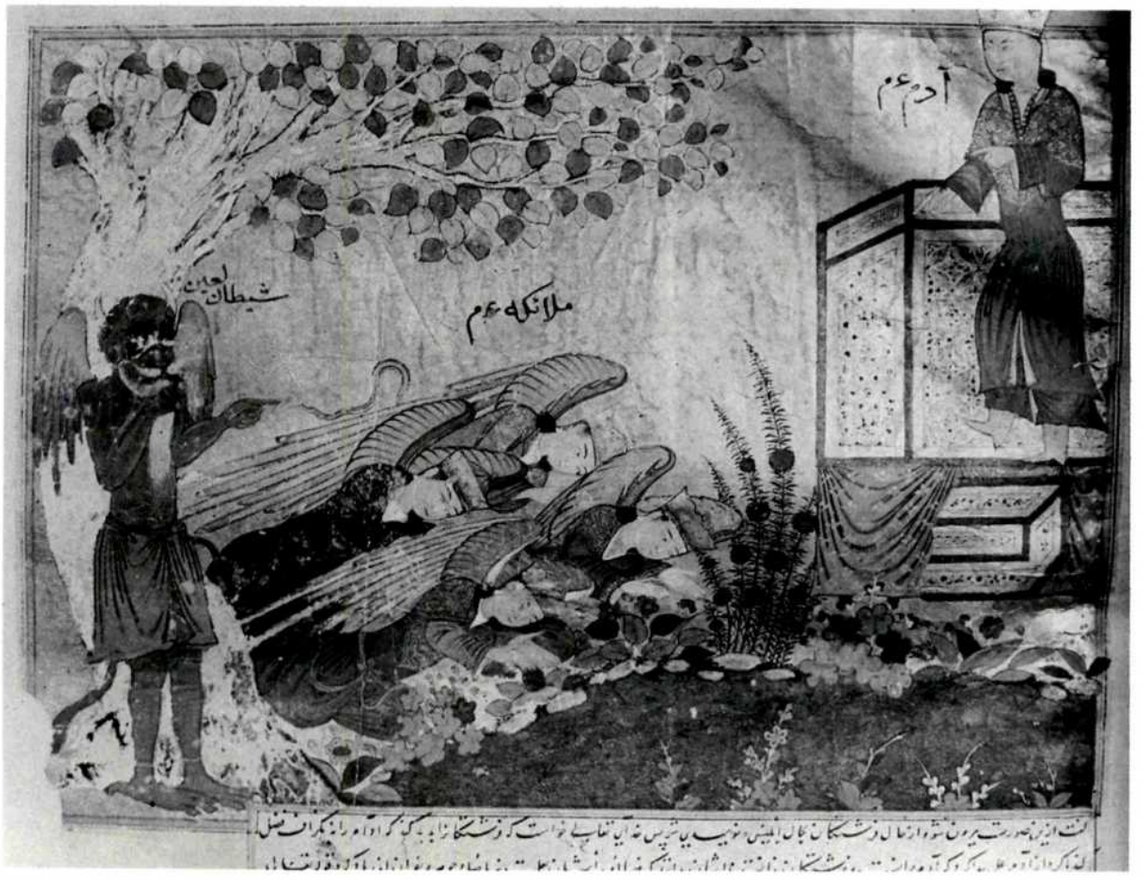
818-19/1415-16 (Herat). Historical compendium (*Kulliyat*) of Hafiz-i Abru, Topkapi, B.282, with 20 miniatures. A large and magnificent manuscript dedicated to Shah Rukh. 42 x 31 cm.[25] (Figs. 16, 17).

About half the number of miniatures may be attributed to Pir Ahmad Baghshimali. Working once more on a large scale, he returns to his broad mural style, well exemplified here by the angels worshipping Adam (fol. 16a), the sacrifice of Isaac (fol. 35b), Yusuf appearing to Zulaykha and her maids (fol. 41a—perhaps the earliest representation of this subject?), and the angel carrying Bilqis Queen of Sheba to visit Solomon (fol. 74a). The figures and faces in the "Pir Ahmad" miniatures are virtually unchanged from his earlier style.

A number of miniatures in the above manuscripts, clearly the work of a single artist, display the characteristics we have already noted as marking the style tentatively associated with Pir Ahmad Baghshimali, and they also demonstrate his outstanding



16. "Yusuf entering the apartment of Zulaykha and her ladies." 1416. Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul, B. 282, fol. 41a.



17. "Angels adoring Adam while Satan stands apart." 1416. Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, B. 282, fol. 16a.

originality. In the British Library Miscellany he laid down the basic compositions of Nizami illustrations for the remainder of the Timurid period, besides exploiting the novelty of marginal drawings; in the Wellcome horoscope and the Istanbul University astronomical manuscript he tackled subjects never attempted before; and in the little fragmentary *Iskandar Nama* he displayed what amounts to genius in the witty and allusive little figures with which he enlivened the margins.

It is perhaps appropriate at this point (following Schroeder) to draw attention to the mistaken efforts of a number of writers to work these miniatures into what they call the "Shiraz school." Of course many of them did happen to be executed at Shiraz, but they had no direct connection with the local Muzaffarid style of the late fourteenth century, nor with the style that grew out of it under the patronage of Ibrahim Sultan from 1415 onwards. These latter constitute the true Shiraz school. The miniatures produced under Iskandar's patronage, whether at Shiraz, Yazd, Isfahan or elsewhere, represent the metropolitan court style, which began at Baghdad under Sultan Ahmad Jalayr and was shortly to be established at Herat under Baysunghur Mirza. It was not tied to any particular locality, and moved with the residence of the patron prince. It seems to have had little effect on, and was certainly not influenced by, the local styles with which it happened to come in contact.

Two detached miniatures of the highest quality, one of them long famous and the other less widely known, remain to be considered. The first, in the Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris, shows the Persian prince Humay and the Chinese princess Humayun meeting for the first time in the palace garden, and it is one of the best known of all Persian miniatures.[26] (See figure 7 in Thomas Lentz, "Changing Worlds: Bihzad and the New Painting"). It was exhibited at Munich in 1910, at Paris in 1912, at London (Burlington House) in 1931, and elsewhere; it formed the background (wallpaper?) to Gustav Klimt's portrait of Madame Lippmann, and it has even appeared in a debased form printed on drying-up cloths and upholstery materials. It is comparatively large (29 x 17.5 cm.), and originally adorned a manuscript of Khwaju Kirmani's poems. This manuscript was evidently broken up a long time ago, and no other miniatures from it are known; illuminated headings cut from various parts of the text have been mounted at the top and bottom of the miniature. The garden is enclosed within a decorative scarlet fence silhouetted against a moonlit and starlit sky, and traversed by a little stream bordered by trees and flowers; rose-bushes and other blossoming plants fill almost every inch of space, as Humay, his hands modestly crossed on his breast, confronts the Chinese princess and her two ladies, their scarves and girdles undulating gracefully *à la chinoise.*

Naturally this superb painting has been noticed by most writers on the subject. Martin reproduced it in 1912, dating it to *c.* 1430, and it also appeared in *Meisterwerke* and Marteau-Vever. In 1923 Kühnel placed it about the middle of the fifteenth century, and suggested that it might be the work of Shah Rukh's painter Ghiyath al-Din, who accompanied an embassy to China; but this idea has not found much support. In the *Survey* (1939) he placed it at Herat, *c.* 1430. Binyon, Wilkinson and Gray (1933) agreed with him on Herat, but dated it "probably not later than 1425." In 1948 Basil Gray again located it at Herat, pushing the date back to 1420-25, but in his Skira book of 1961 it is not mentioned.[27] Stchoukine (1954) also puts it at Herat under the patronage of Baysunghur, *c.* 1430.

If, despite the opinions just quoted, we consider it in relation to the works we have tentatively associated with Pir Ahmad Baghshimali, it is certainly larger, far more elaborate and packed with detail, especially in the vegetation; in fact it is far more akin to the 1396 Khwaju Kirmani miniatures. But the faces strongly recall those in the 1397 epics and other manuscripts we have been considering. The figures, on the other hand, are slimmer than those in the latter, yet not as slim as those in the works of 'Abd al-Hayy and Junayd. The manuscript from which this miniature was taken was larger than any of those associated with Iskandar Sultan, who seems to have had a penchant for pocket-size volumes. What can be made of these apparently conflicting facts?

This miniature is unquestionably the work of a great master. Stylistically it cannot be attributed to 'Abd al-Hayy or Junayd, and, *pace* Kühnel and Stchoukine, it appears to be too early to be associated with Baysunghur at Herat. We are left, once more, with an awkward gap, and, as before, there is only one man (so far as we know) capable of filling it: Pir Ahmad Baghshimali. If we accept this idea, the miniature must come early in the artist's career, and was probably executed under the patronage of Sultan Ahmad Jalayr, in view of its similarity in scale and general appearance to the Khwaju manuscript of 1396. If, then, it is indeed attributable to Pir Ahmad, it belongs to the period before he broadened his style for mural work, and when he was still developing the tradition bequeathed to him by Shams al-Din.

The other miniature, in the Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University,[28] represents Tahmina, bride of Rustam and mother of the ill-starred Suhrab, being ushered

by a slave into the bridal chamber where Rustam awaits her. Schroeder had every reason to wax lyrical when he came across this fine miniature among the stock of the New York dealer H. Khan Monif, and acquired it for the Fogg (now Sackler) at a bargain price; he certainly did it proud in his book. But it may be thought that he let his natural exhilaration run away with him in his scornful dismissal of the representation of the same subject in the Royal Asiatic Society's *Shahnama* of *c.* 1440, which is really very good. Certainly the Sackler version is a splendid painting, and Schroeder's opinion that it is the finest surviving portrayal of the subject is shared by Dr M. S. Simpson in her updating of Schroeder's catalogue.[29] As already noted, Schroeder argues strongly for Pir Ahmad Baghshimali as its painter, but Dr Simpson, as a result of correspondence with Mr Robert Skelton, formerly of the Victoria and Albert Museum, seems inclined to accept the latter's suggestion that the damaged inscription above the door includes the name, not of Jalal al-Din Iskandar Sultan as urged by Schroeder, but of 'Ala al-Dawla son of Baysunghur, whom he succeeded in 1433. Though broadly contemporary, the painting itself does not display all the characteristics associated here with Pir Ahmad Baghshimali, and its date, and hence its authorship, must for the present remain matters of speculation.

It may be asked, is an exercise of this kind of any use? Does it advance our knowledge of Persian painting? After all, it is simply a hypothetical construction without solid foundation or proof. An affirmative answer may be given to these questions. Firstly, it introduces controversy, which is in itself a stimulating activity, often leading to clearer perceptions and a wider perspective. Secondly, it has provided a close-knit nucleus of miniatures (to which some may wish to add, and from which others will feel tempted to subtract) of a style so clearly identifiable and characterized by so many quirks and idiosyncrasies of drawing and treatment that they impel one to regard them as the work of a single artist. They include many of the best miniatures of the period in question; Pir Ahmad Baghshimali was certainly at work in this period and was known as "the zenith of his time." It is, then, surely not unreasonable to accept them, provisionally at least, as his, and thus to raise him to his rightful position beside Bihzad, Sultan Muhammad, and Riza-i 'Abbasi in the very front rank of Persian painters.

NOTES

1. E. Schroeder, *Persian Miniatures in the Fogg Museum of Art* (Cambridge, Mass., 1942).
2. Quoted in L. Binyon, J. V. S. Wilkinson and B. Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting* (London, 1933), Appendix I. Dust Muhammad, a court painter of repute at the court of Tahmasp, was commissioned by Prince Bahram Mirza to compile this album to illustrate the history of painting.
3. Quoted in I. Stchoukine, *Les Miniatures des Manuscrits Timurides* (Paris, 1954), p. 4.
4. Quoted in ibid., p. 3.
5. Schroeder connects the name Baghshimali with a suburb of Tabriz; he was apparently not aware of the name of Timur's palace at Samarkand, or he would surely have preferred it as the origin of the artist's additional name.
6. Quoted in Binyon, Wilkinson and Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting,* p. 190.
7. Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Petermann I 386 (Pertsch 367). I. Stchoukine et al., *Illuminierte Islamische Handschriften* (Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland XVI) (Wiesbaden, 1971), p. 17 and taf. 13.
8. F. E. Karatay, *Topkapi Sarayi Müzesi Kütüphanesi: Farsça Yazmalar Kataloğu* (Istanbul, 1961), No. 138; B. Gray, ed., *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia, 14th-16th centuries* (Paris/London, 1979), pp. 146, 148, 163 and 309; attention is called to the connection of one group of miniatures in the manuscript with work done for Iskandar Sultan. However, the chronogram dates seem not to have been noticed, and the manuscript is dated "*c.* 1425-33." Later (*Cambridge History of Iran,* vol. VI, p. 862) Mr Gray considered the manuscript to belong to the Turkman period. N. M. Titley, *Persian Miniature Painting* (London: British Library, 1983), fig. 25; Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, 1989), pp. 132, 166 (Catalogue no. 46) (Referred to as *TPV* in subsequent notes).
9. The most credible attribution to 'Abd al-Hayy is by Dust Muhammad in the Bahram Mirza album (H. 2154), attached to a large and very beautiful miniature of a sleeping youth with angels; see Gray, *The Arts of the Book,*

p. 118. It is very close in style, as one would expect, to the miniatures of Junayd in the celebrated *Khwaju Kirmani* manuscript of 1396 in the British Library (Add. 18113).
10. Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, No. 1939.225. Schroeder, *Persian Miniatures,* pp. 51-74; M. Kevorkian and J. P. Sicre, *Les Jardins du Désir* (Paris, 1983), pp. 30-31 (in colour); *TPV,* p. 130 (Catalogue no. 45). This miniature has always been said to come from a manuscript of the *Shahnama.* Certainly the incident depicted occurs in the epic, but the format of the miniature, twice as high as it is wide (20.9 x 10.5 cm.), is not normal for a Timurid *Shahnama* illustration, and the painting may be thought more likely to have come from an anthology.
11. B. W. Robinson, "The Tehran *Kalila wa Dimna*: a Reconsideration" in *Oriental Art* (1958), pp. 3-10; Gray, *The Arts of the Book,* p. 217.
12. Stchoukine, *Les Miniatures,* pp. 8 (note 3), 42.
13. For references see B.W. Robinson, *Persian Miniature Painting from Collections in the British Isles* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1967), No. 10, to which may be added Gray, *The Arts of the Book,* p. 125; Titley, *Persian Miniature Painting,* pl. 3; *TPV,* p. 59 (Catalogue no. 16A and B).
14. B. W. Robinson, "The Earliest Illustrated Manuscript of Nizami?" in *Oriental Art* (Autumn 1957), pp. 96-103; Robinson, *Persian Miniature Painting,* No. 11.
15. Robinson, *Persian Miniature Painting,* No. 12.
16. Karatay, *Topkapi Sarayi Müzesi,* No. 887; I. Stchoukine, "La Peinture à Yazd au début du XVe siècle" in *Syria* XLIII (1966): 99-104 (Figs. 5-8 in this article are attributable to Pir Ahmad); Gray, *The Arts of the Book,* p. 123; F. Cagman and Z. Tanindi, *Topkapi Saray Museum: Islamic Miniature Painting* (Istanbul, 1979), fig. 10; J. M. Rogers, F. Cagman and Z. Tanindi, *The Topkapi Saray Museum: The Albums and Illustrated Manuscripts* (London, 1986), pl. 55; *TPV,* p. 167 (Catalogue no. 59).
17. Yates Thompson, *Illustrations from 100 Manuscripts,* 7 vols. (London, 1907-18), vol. 3, pls. 28-44; F. R. Martin, *Miniatures from the period of Timur* (Vienna, 1926), pls. 14-16; A. Sakisian, *La Miniature persane* (Paris and Brussels, 1929), figs. 44-48; A. U. Pope, ed., *A Survey of Persian Art* (Oxford, 1939), 5: 859-61; B. Gray, *Persian Painting* (Skira, 1961), pp. 74-77, 79; Gray, *The Arts of the Book,* pp. 126, 133; Kevorkian and Sicre, *Les Jardins du Désir,* p. 93.
18. In colour in *Illustrated London News* (Christmas number 1981).
19. E. Kühnel, *Miniaturmalerei im Islamischen Orient* (Berlin, 1923), taf. 41; *TPV,* pp. 145-47 (Catalogue no. 36).
20. Kevorkian and Sicre, *Les Jardins du Désir,* p. 95; *TPV,* p. 148.
21. For references see Robinson, *Persian Miniature Painting,* No. 13, to which may be added Gray, *The Arts of the Book,* p. 135, and Titley, *Persian Miniature Painting,* pl. 4; *TPV,* pp. 116, 118 (Catalogue no. 35).
22. Stchoukine, *Les Miniatures,* p. 41.
23. B. W. Robinson, "Two Persian Manuscripts in the Library of the Marquess of Bute" (Part I) in *Oriental Art* (Winter 1971), pp. 1-4.
24. B. W. Robinson, "Persian Painting and the National Epic" in *Proceedings of the British Academy* LXVIII (1982): 275-97, fig. 12; *TPV,* pp. 148-50.
25. See note 8.
26. This miniature has often been reproduced; perhaps the best version is Binyon, Wilkinson and Gray, *Persian Miniature Painting,* pl. XLI. See also *TPV,* p. 117 (Catalogue no. 34).
27. B. Gray, *Persian Painting* (London: Iris Colour Books, 1948), p. 12, pl. 5.
28. See note 10.
29. M. S. Simpson, *Arab and Persian Painting in the Fogg Art Museum* (Cambridge, Mass., 1980), No. 8.

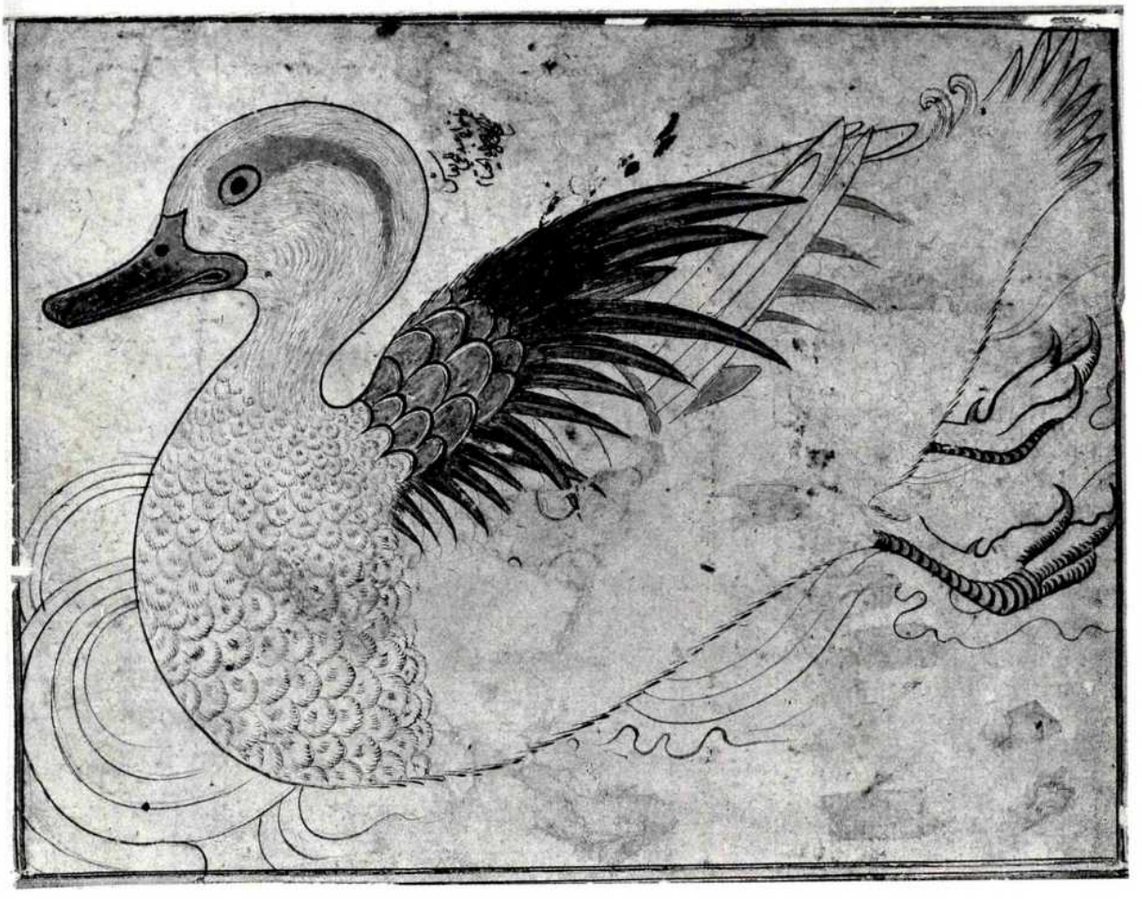
Siyah Qalam

To the memory of Basil Gray

J.M. Rogers

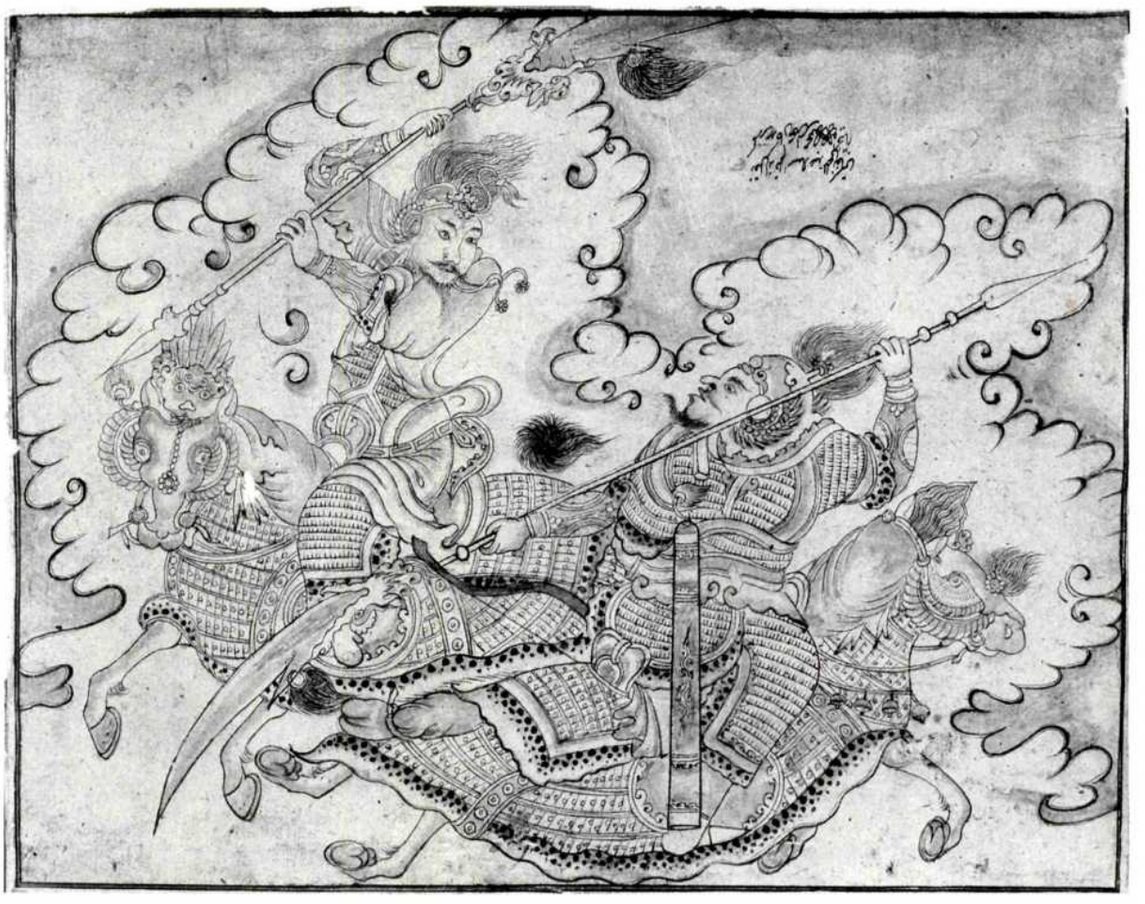
Largely thanks to Basil Gray's later works,[1] the historical development of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Persian painting first sketched in his seminal catalogue[2] has finally become established. The study of four albums in the Topkapi Saray (H. 2152, 2153, 2160, and to a lesser extent H. 2154), did much to amplify the history of painting as it could be charted from the illustrated book, and demonstrated, notably, the crucial importance of Jala'irid Baghdad and Tabriz (*c.* 1370-1410) for Timurid painting and the importance of Turcoman Tabriz for the development of Safavid painting in the early sixteenth century.

Yet, paradoxically, much of the contents of the albums and their ulterior provenance are still just as much disputed as when they first became known. As regards their immediate provenance, broadly, it seems established that the material (to which other albums are relevant, notably F. 1423, Istanbul University Library, and the Diez albums in the Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, West Berlin) arrived in Istanbul no earlier than the 1470s (if so, probably as booty from Mehmed II's victory over the Akkoyunlu Turcomans at Başkent/Otluk Beli in 1473) but more probably as late as 1514 (if so, as booty from Selim I's victory over the Safavids at Çaldiran in that year). They may or may not have been bound on their arrival, but after Çaldiran they were evidently in folders with some form of identification on them; moreover, only a very small proportion of their contents may plausibly be supposed to have been added in Istanbul. They must be made up of the stock of one or more court scriptoria, principally, to judge from the signed calligraphy they contain, Shiraz, Herat and Tabriz. That goes far to explain the extreme diversity of their contents: calligraphy, both signed specimens and chancery documents, as well as pages cut out, apparently at random, from manuscripts of the *Shahname* or of the *Khamse* of Nizami; paintings, some unfinished, including both worked-up parts of scrolls and pages from illustrated books, as well as works in large format which are difficult to associate with books at all; fine paper cuts; sketches or patterns, some of them pounced for copying; and fine worked-up drawings, some of them almost folio size, therefore not intended for book illustration, in black ink but sometimes with wash details. These last, and the paper cuts, were evidently album leaves, of the sort known to have been commissioned for Turcoman court libraries.



1. "A swimming duck," inscribed in *ta'liq*, "*Qalam-i Khwaja* 'Abd al-Hayy *naqqash* [painter], Muhammad b. Mahmudshah al-Khayyam." 15th century, probably Tabriz. Brush drawing, ink on paper enhanced with gold. 14.4x19.7 cm. Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, West Berlin, Diez A fol. 70 Seite 26/1. This is evidently a copy of an unsigned painting in gouache on paper, Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2153, fol. 46b, though the dimensions are slightly different. The subject is also related to chinoiserie studies of ducks on silk or gauze in the Hazine albums and other collections. Whether any of these was the work of 'Abd al-Hayy is unknown.

2. "A mounted archer in Mongol costume," signed below in *ta'liq*, "*Qalam-i Kamtarin-i bandagan* [pen of the humblest of the slaves] Muhammad b. Mahmudshah al-Khayyam" and with a scrawled attribution, "Muhammad Khayyam," in a later hand. Later 15th century, probably Tabriz. Brush drawing, ink on paper enhanced with gold. 22.4x28.3 cm. Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, West Berlin, Diez A fol. 72 Seite 13. There is another version of the subject in Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2152, fol. 50b.



3. "Immortals in combat," inscribed above, but the wrong way up, in *ta'liq*, "*Naql* [*or naqala*] *az qalam-i* [after the pen of] ustad 'Abd al-Hayy *naqqash kamtarin bandagan* Muhammad b. Mahmudshah al-Khayyam." 15th century. Brush drawing. 19.6x25.9 cm. Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, West Berlin, Diez A fol. 71 Seite 65. There is a reversed and slightly reduced copy in the Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2153, fol. 87a, itself after a Chinese prototype of the Yuan period.

Brilliant, fascinating and rich as these albums are, they had very little influence on the development of sixteenth-century Ottoman painting, and the only Ottoman Sultan who appears to have looked at them is Ahmed I (1603-17). The great *Falname* executed for him by the orders of Kalender Paşa (Topkapi Saray, H. 1703) contains copies of some paintings in the album H. 2153. With Ahmed I can mostly be associated numerous scrawled attributions on certain pages to an "Ustad Muhammad Siyah Qalam," or just "Muhammad Siyah Qalam," quite possibly in his own hand. It goes without saying that, unlike the calligraphic specimens in the albums, practically none of the paintings and drawings in the albums is signed. Unfortunately, the works thus attributed are of the utmost stylistic diversity, obviously attributable to diverse hands at very different periods. Worse still, not one of the standard Persian or Ottoman histories of painting, by Dust Muhammad, the Qadi Ahmad or Mustafa 'Ali, says anything at all about Muhammad Siyah Qalam.

Zeren Tanindi[3] has observed that one sheet, a line drawing of a camel and a groom

4. "Dionysus, Triptolemus, wind-gods and attendants," with an attribution, possibly 17th century, to "Muhammad Khayyam." Later 15th century, probably Tabriz. Brush drawing, ink on paper. 16.4x16.4 cm. Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, West Berlin, Diez A fol. 72 Seite 3/2. The drawing is a remarkably exact copy of the famous antique cameo known as the Tazza Farnese first known in Europe in 1471.

(H. 2153, fol. 104b), apparently bears a proper signature, "*mashq-i* Muhammad Siyah Qalam," in a careful *ta'liq*, a script exploited in the chanceries of the Timurid and Turcoman courts. This is not, however, adequate to identify a core group. Notably, it is far from the exotic paintings with which the attribution to Muhammad Siyah Qalam has become particularly associated, variously on worn, unsized paper or on brownish silk, and variously scroll fragments and worked-up paintings of strange or grotesque subjects, demons, wanderers and blacks, in styles and colour schemes difficult otherwise to parallel in the painting of Asia. They are highly naturalistic; gloom and ugliness are not shirked, in total contrast to the great degree of stylization, refinement and polish of later Muslim court painting. The scribbled sobriquet "Siyah Qalam" on these compositions is, moreover, inappropriate. For *siyah qalami*, literally "black pen," is a term used by the sixteenth-century Persian writers on painting for line drawing,

practised as an autonomous genre—though none of the painters they mention is credited with preponderant expertise in it. Such line drawing by the early fifteenth century was already highly esteemed, as witness the exquisite marginal ornament of the *Divan* of Ahmad Jala'ir (Baghdad, *c.* 1410, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 30.32) and the signed drawing of the camel mentioned above. With these productions the exotic group of "Muhammad Siyah Qalam" paintings has not the slightest connection of style and only the barest correspondence of subject-matter.

Black line drawings in the Istanbul albums bearing *attributions* to "Muhammad Siyah Qalam" may well owe their greater degree of stylistic homogeneity to a common provenance, the Akkoyunlu court at Tabriz. B. W. Robinson[4] has noted numerous correspondences within the group with signed work by the Akkoyunlu painters Shaykhi al-Ya'qubi and Darvish Muhammad. With them should also be compared Muhammad b. Mahmudshah al-Khayyam,[5] for not only does he regularly sign his drawings in a *ta'liq* hand with a characteristic flourish for "Mahmudshah" (Fig. 1), but also his signature, exceptionally, appears on drawings in the albums both in Istanbul and in West Berlin. Several of his extant works, like a study of a mounted archer (Fig. 2), are exact copies of unsigned paintings in the Hazine album, H. 2153. Despite the resultant lack of stylistic homogeneity, however, he may be assigned to the later fifteenth century. He was clearly conscious of working in a tradition, for a signed drawing (Fig. 3) of two Chinese immortals in combat, in some way after a Chinese Yuan original, bears the additional information that it was after (*naql*, or *naqala, az*) a work by 'Abd al-Hayy, who is stated by some sixteenth-century writers to have been carried off from Baghdad by Tamerlane. We know nothing of his work, nor can we even conclude that it was known to Muhammad b. Mahmudshah: it may well be significant that a painting which itself was a copy after a Yuan original is ascribed to him. One of the most interesting of these drawings (Fig. 4), unsigned but with a later attribution to Muhammad al-Khayyam, has been shown to be of the famous antique hard-stone vessel, the Tazza Farnese, now in Naples.[6]

The study of line drawing in the later Muslim cultures of Iran, Central Asia and India demands a treatment on the lines of Bernhard Degenhart and Annegrit Schmitt's corpus of early Italian drawings.[7] We must, however, turn now to the groups of paintings attributed to Muhammad Siyah Qalam which over the past twenty or thirty years have evoked such inconclusive and often implausible speculation.

It is uncomfortable to admit that certain styles are, within the limits of present knowledge, difficult to categorize, either because cultures are hybrid or because the distinctive contribution of external factors may be impossible to assess. For the Siyah Qalam paintings, however, it is even difficult, despite a learned colloquium at the Percival David Foundation in 1980,[8] to suggest a culture to which they might have belonged. True, many of them, though not the gloomy wanderers, show chinoiserie elements; but there is general agreement that despite certain characteristically Chinese stylistic effects in the scroll fragments, notably of demons, they are not of Chinese workmanship, any more than is the "Solomon Romance" on the legend of the Biblical and Koranic patriarch and prophet which they may well have illustrated. The chinoiserie is by itself of no diagnostic value for it permeated the art of the Islamic book at Baghdad, Tabriz, Shiraz and Herat in a succession of waves, from the fourteenth to the late fifteenth century. The attribution to Inner Asia or Mogholistan (Farghana and parts east), though no more plausible, has been curiously tenacious, particularly among Turkish scholars like Toğan, Aslanapa, Ipşiroğlu, Beyhan Karamağarali and the late

5. "Demons rending a horse" (detail), with a scrawled attribution, "*Kar-i* [work of] Muhammad Siyah Qalam." 15th century. Scroll fragment gouache on silk. 20x49.6 cm. Topkapi Saray Museum Libra Istanbul, H. 2153, fol. 40b.

6. "Wanderers, with stoves a a cooking pot, a figure riding donkey and crones following, with a scrawled attribution, "*Kar-i* [work of] Ustad Muhammad Siyah Qalam." Later 15th century, probably Tabriz. Line and wash on brownish, unsized paper. 14.4x26.3 cm. Topkapi Sara Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2153, fol. 55a.

Emel Esin. It may be a legacy of the nostalgic pan-Turanianism expounded by early twentieth-century romantic nationalists like Ziya Gökalp in his *Türkçülüğün Esaslari*, or of the romantic orientalism of Strzygowsky and Diez, whose teaching was extremely influential in pre-war and immediately post-war Turkey. The Inner Asian attribution relies heavily upon such shadowy factors as shamanism, Buddhism and ancient Uyghur ethnology and religion, and arbitrarily conflates periods and cultures superimposing them on to the fifteenth century when there is no evidence that they were present at all.[9]

Shamanism in the anthropology of religion covers geographically very different regions and a great variety of beliefs and practices so that it is often difficult to tell what is shamanistic and what is not. Claims for the persistence in folk-religion under Islam of shamanistic practices (whatever these may have been) deriving from the Siberian tribes, the Mongols and possibly the ancient Turks presuppose, moreover, a crude phenomenology of religion where similarities of behaviour (which are often, anyway, exaggerated) are equated with similarities of belief. It is also asserted that this inherited Turcic shamanism was spread by wandering dervishes like the Qalandars,[10] whose behaviour, including their vagrancy, was indeed stigmatized by the Muslim orthodox, though their actual beliefs have rarely if ever been stated. The clean-shaven Qalandars have, however, little in common with the heavily bearded wanderers of the Siyah Qalam paintings. With the Qalandars have been conflated another dervish sect, though not of vagrants, the Yassaviyya, founded by Ahmad Yassavi, whose shrine at Yassi (Gorod Turkestan in Soviet Kazakhstan) was rebuilt on a massive scale by Tamerlane in 1397. This is no evidence for the importance of the Yassaviyya at the time, since his well-documented propensity to patronize dervishes of wild appearance and uncouth behaviour seems usually to have been inconsequential. In fact, the historians of fifteenth-century Central Asia barely mention them; they give no grounds for the belief that they were shamanistic or otherwise heterodox; and the belief, anyway, that Sufism was naturally inclined to heterodoxy is groundless: for every group with strange practices or beliefs we can find a group of fundamentalist orthodoxy.

This unhistorical attitude to Islam in fourteenth- fifteenth-century Central Asia is complemented by blatant misinterpretations of the subject-matter of the paintings. Specifically, a scroll fragment on silk (H. 2153, fol. 40b) (Fig. 5) with a group of demons rending a horse, which has been argued to represent a shamanistic scene of horse sacrifice, cannot be anything of the kind. Why the shamans should be shown as demons is not explained, and though horse sacrifice indeed played a part in the burial rites of the ancient Turks and the Mongols,[11] the wretched beast was not rent limb from limb, but stuffed and placed at or over the grave. Horses were also used by Mongols and earlier Turks as meat, though in the Hanafi *madhhab* (school of law) it is actually *haram* (forbidden). The Oirat tribe,[12] who arrived in Mamluk Cairo in the late thirteenth century and settled outside the northern gates of the city, scandalized the local population by eating horseflesh. Tamerlane's revolting feasts at Samarkand and Shahr-i Sabz, with great porcelain bowls of horseflesh and entrails, were not, however, repeated by his more orthodox descendants Shahrukh, Ulugh Beg, and certainly Babur, as far as I can tell from their historians.[13] The beastly demon scene need not therefore depict anything more than demons' beastly habits.

One of the most curious aspects of the Siyah Qalam paintings is that they seem to have tempted normally rigorous scholars to suspend their critical faculties, take the line of least resistance and make up a story, whether plausible or not. While they are mostly

7. "Camp Scene" (detail). La
15th century, probably Tabri
Line and wash on brownish,
unsized paper. 19.8x37.1 cn
Topkapi Saray Museum
Library, Istanbul, H. 2153,
fol. 8b.

8. "Exotic animals." Later
15th century, probably Tabri
Scroll fragments, brush
drawing, ink and wash on
paper. 32x49 cm Topkapi
Saray Museum Library,
Istanbul, H. 2153, fol. 95b.

easy to refute, it is more difficult to make positive suggestions, for it is necessary not only to identify the figures and the scenes in which they appear but also to suggest where the painters of the "Muhammad Siyah Qalam" group worked. The paintings are divided, by genus and by occupation, into three largely parallel groups: demons, blacks and wanderers; grooms, carpenters or builders; and what could be called entertainments—ghoulish picnics, teasing animals, dancing, firework scenes. The division is not systematic, nor, indeed, is any group the work of a single hand; and the reasons for the parallelism and its extent remain obscure. The blacks are particularly remarkable since, although dark-skinned figures occur widely in Islamic painting, they are almost invariably Indian. Their appearance clearly conforms to the disparaging descriptions of blacks by the classical Muslim writers,[14] and the activities reflect the generally patronizing Muslim view that their love of music and dancing was simple-minded. The wanderers (Fig. 6) have often been said to be nomads, but recently there has been a greater degree of agreement that this is a most inaccurate term. They have virtually no animals, either for baggage or for grazing; there is not a yurt or an encampment in sight; and many of them appear to be unshod, which is all the more inappropriate since the heavy garments they wear (which may be felt, though they do not drape as if they were) suggest that they are wandering in winter. Equally the unredeemed ugliness of young and old alike is a bitter contrast to the traditions of the nomadic Turco-Mongol tribes, who through the *ghulams* (young, male slaves) they furnished to so many Muslim dynasties created an ideal of male beauty which became a topos in Persian literature.

The extreme naturalism of the wanderer group (which may or may not argue for realism) has made it tempting to conclude that they are after sketches from life and that they are in a sense journalism, even though that is a negligible factor in Islamic painting. If they are after a journalistic source, this demands a context. Among the events with which they have been associated are: a) Tamerlane's deportations of craftsmen from the cities he captured, sacked or destroyed to work on his buildings at Shahr-i-Sabz and Samarkand (*c.* 1385-1405); b) the Timurid embassy to Ming China in 1419-22 described by its secretary Ghiyath al-Din Naqqash; and, less plausibly, c) delegations of Qipchaq Turks to the court of Mehmed the Conquerer in later fifteenth-century Istanbul. Both a) and b) raise insuperable objections. The wanderers are clearly not working, as Clavijo described them, under constraint; there are no buildings or even building sites; there seems no reason to revise the conclusion brilliantly presented by Ivanov and Akimushkin that there was no painting at Tamerlane's court at Samarkand; and the historians' accounts of his deportations, for which the physical evidence is surprisingly weak, may well be commonplace panegyric of a World-Conqueror.[15] In the case of the embassy to China, Ghiyath al-Din's[16] narrative is not obviously that of a painter. The sites he describes in detail are principally great Buddhist temples and their idols—which he, incidentally, often fails to recognize as such. The "Siyah Qalam" wanderers are obviously not illustrations to that particular narrative. But why should the painters refer merely to events which happen to have come down to us? In fact, recourse to the journalism theory is naive and a bit presumptuous. It also does little for the chronology.

One obvious conclusion of the rough parallelism of the three groups of demons, blacks and wanderers is that they could be seen as studies (though rather more than sketches) of figures in particular positions—with sticks, with tools, bearing heavy weights, dancing, conversing, and so on, which, like many studies, may never have

been used. Certainly, some pages are not compositions at all but congeries of vignettes (like the elegant study of a camel and two grooms, H. 2153, fol. 104b, signed "*mashq-i* Ustad Muhammad Siyah Qalam" and an unsigned associated study, H. 2153, fol. 82b). Such also is a camp scene (Fig. 7) where the images of servants preparing food or blowing a fire, knock-kneed horses grazing, dogs playing, arms stacked and a traveller with his baggage in conversation with a poorly-dressed "native" are actually all discrete units. These vignettes may be compared with studies of a water-buffalo in the Bahram Mirza album or even with scroll fragments of exotic animals (Fig. 8). Though in comparison with these, the style of the wanderer paintings is coarse and almost deliberately crude, an impression probably exaggerated by the brownish unpolished paper, they are by no means far in spirit or aesthetic feeling from such studies.

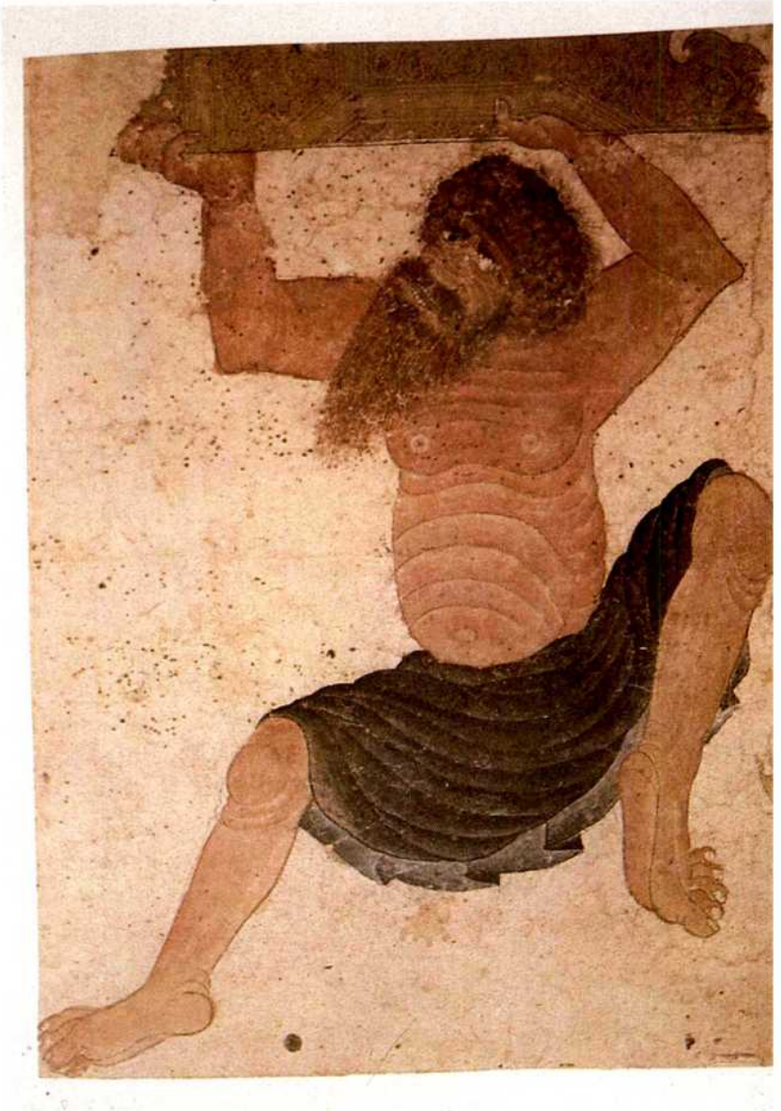
Many of the sheets have been cut up, remains of limbs are to be seen at the edge, and they may originally therefore have been larger compositions or groups, the significance of which is now difficult to reconstruct. The difficulty of interpretation, moreover, may partly stem from the fact that the draughtsmen themselves did not fully understand what the people they drew were doing. Two sheets (Fig. 9), one a later copy, have black figures pulling out their tongues. Could they possibly have been a doctor's patients? If we cannot tell, then neither, probably, could the draughtsman. Possible misinterpretation adds yet another complication—the distinction between what could have been direct observation and the decorative details added by a court painter when the sketch was worked up.

Some of the sheets also bear sketches which show that they have been re-used. A sheet with dancing demons (H. 2153, fol. 64a) overlies a sketch in red of a twelve-pointed star and the beginnings of a star-polygon system; a painting of a demon bearing away a horse (H. 2153, fol. 38a) overlies sketched arabesques in black. The demon paintings on silk show no such underlying detail. For the wanderers, as with some of the demon paintings on paper, there are clear traces of outlines in black underlying the gouache. If these also were copied from paintings on silk, the originals do not survive, but it follows that, for all their vividness and apparent immediacy, some or all of them are worked-up studio products.[17] Moreover, quite apart from recurring details like the round brown eyes of the wanderers and their animals, which could well be stylistic idiosyncrasies, certain elements are plainly mechanical repeats, like the copulating dogs first noted by Zeren Tanindi.[18] Recurrences, moreover, are not restricted to details. Thus a camel-rider shown from the back in extreme *contrapposto* (Fig. 10) is evidently identical with the prone figure crushed by a rock (Fig. 11). The treatment of the fur of the reddish camel in the former also strongly suggests the half-naked, red-bearded, blue-eyed "Atlas" figure (Fig. 12), who is in some respects markedly similar to a red-bearded slave (Fig. 13). This suggests that on sheets now lost other figures may have been repeated.

Even where the figures are not identical, however, many of them are from the same ethnic group or similarly clothed. For example, two half-naked figures (Fig. 13), one red and one black, wear skirts and stoles with almost identical gold jewellery, anklets, wristlets, ear-rings and hold staves with bells, the red-skinned man with a bell round his neck and the black with a nose-ring. These ornaments are not personal finery but the attributes of slaves; demons (H. 2153, ff. 48a, 27b) are similarly shown. The half-naked figures recur on other sheets, though without jewellery. Some of the red-skinned men are clean shaven (Fig. 14), but they share similar physical characteristics —enormous hands and feet, pronounced jowls and blunt, snub noses and sometimes

9. "A black pulling out his tongue and a bearded man on a *kursi* [chair]." Later 15th century, Akkoyunlu Tabriz. Gouache and gold on brownish paper. 13.1 x 19.7 cm. Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2160, fol. 89a. A worked-up copy of a larger format line and wash drawing on brownish unsized paper, H. 2153, fol. 90a.

even blue eyes. These are all features peculiar to northerners—Russians, not Asiatics or Turks. The clothed wanderers are also very largely of the same physical type. Notably, their heavy beards and enormous hands and feet are entirely uncharacteristic of the nomads of the Asiatic steppes.Their bell-shaped headdresses, which are plainly not even apologies for Muslim turbans, are diversely trimmed and many have gilt details (both the diversity and the gold details could well be ascribed to the painter's imagination), and the men's garments are not Asiatic either.[19] They are in fact all of a kind, an outer robe with lapels in contrasting colours with wide revers and a broad collar behind (Fig. 15) which can be raised to be high-standing (Fig. 10). They are waisted but are only exceptionally belted (H. 2153, fol. 65a). Boots, when present, may have turned-up toes and appear to be nailed (Fig. 10); they may bear appliqué decoration, evidently felt cloud-bands. Even making allowance for what painters and copyists have added of their own, one might think the merchant in the encampment vignettes (Fig. 7) looks most like a Russian boyar. That is, certainly, to beg the



10. "A camel rider, evidently in conversation with another," with a scrawled attribution, "*Kar-i* [work of] Ustad Muhammad Siyah Qalam." Later 15th century, probably Tabriz. Cut-down sheet, brush drawing, line and gouache on brownish, unsized paper. 19x15.6 cm. Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2153, fol. 54a.

11. "A figure crushed by a rock," (possibly an illustration to the Gayumarth narrative in the *Shahname*). Later 15th century, probably Tabriz. Brush drawing, ink and gouache with gold on brownish, unsized paper. 16.9x27.3 cm. Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2153, fol. 105a.

12. "A half-naked, red-bearded figure holding up a beam or capital." Later 15th century, probably Tabriz. Brush drawing, line and gouache on brownish, unsized paper with details in gold. 25.7x19.8 cm. Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2153, fol. 128a. The figure may suggest an Atlas, or possibly a Samson (cf. Fig. 13).

13. "A red-skinned and a black-skinned slave in conversation." Later 15th century, probably Tabriz. Brush drawing, line and gouache on brownish, unsized paper with gold details. 18.4x26.5 cm. Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2153, fol. 128a. Could this possibly also be connected with a Samson narrative? The blue-eyed figure would then be blind: "Eyeless in Gaza, at the mill with slaves" (*Samson Agonistes*).

question, since the origins of boyar costume as we know it are not well studied, must in part be Asiatic, and may well owe much to deliberate borrowings from the relics of the Golden Horde in the reign of Ivan the Terrible (d. 1584). But the parallel remains close.

These obsėrvations are a slightly amplified version of remarks made in a review of M. S. Ipşiroğlu's facsimile publication of a group of the Siyah Qalam drawings.[20] There is no space to deal with all the alternative identifications, but by elimination the Russian hypothesis remains the most plausible. However, who could they have been? And why should they have come to the notice of a Muslim painter? There are two obvious explanations, though each runs into problems because of the large gaps in our knowledge: they were pilgrims to Jerusalem, or fur traders. Although in the fourteenth century the pilgrimage route from Muscovy to Constantinople was down via the Don or to Azov (Tana) and Kaffa overland across Eastern Europe to Constantinople, the former route passed through the territories of the Golden Horde, at the point, west of Saray, where the Don and Volga are closest.[21] The decline and fall of the Golden Horde at the end of the fourteenth century removed a serious obstacle to Russian communication with the south, and in the fifteenth century Astrakhan was a principal market for both Russian and Tatar merchants, with a flourishing slave trade. With Ottoman expansion in Eastern Europe, moreover, the eastern routes became more attractive and there is evidence that Muscovite relations became somewhat closer with the Akkoyunlu at Tabriz, particularly under Uzun Hasan who married the daughter of the last Byzantine emperor of Trebizond and Ya'qub Beg, who for the Venetians and the Genoese were valuable potential allies against the Ottomans. Contarini[22] met at Tabriz in 1475 a Muscovite ambassador, Marco Rosso (perhaps an Italianized Russian name, not an Italian) and returned in his company via Astrakhan to Moscow.

14. "A red-skinned and a black-skinned slave." Later 15th century, probably Tabriz. Brush drawing, line and gouache on brownish, unsized paper. 16.2x27 cm. Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2153, fol. 37b.

The mechanics of the fur trade in the Near East are also obscure, despite the abundant evidence of a colossal demand for fine furs in fifteenth-century Iran, Turkey and Egypt. For the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it has been argued that the structure and routes of the Muscovite[23] fur trade with the south were radically affected by over-trapping in western Russia which pushed the trappers towards the Urals, while simultaneously Ottoman expansion pushed the routes eastwards towards the Volga and across the Caspian to Tabriz. There would, therefore, have been no dearth of Russians at Tabriz, and if the wanderers are Russians, a Tabrizi painter would not have had to travel far to find them.

Leaving aside obvious differences in technique and media (which, nevertheless, could at some stage decide which of the group are primary, secondary or tertiary), we may say that some of them are almost certainly illustrations, though not necessarily to a book. On the one hand we have clear themes from the labours of Rustam, in the *Shahname* of Firdawsi, in combat with a black div (H. 2153, fol. 64b), or about to be thrown into the Caspian by the div Akvan (Fig. 16); and a prone figure with his head crushed by a boulder (Fig. 11) may similarly relate to the life of King Gayumarth. None of these is a sketch, and their wildness, ferocity and theatricality may even suggest that they were meant to illustrate recitals of the *Shahname.*[24] Such themes link the wanderer paintings to a central classic of Iranian culture, hence, probably, to western Iran rather than Central Asia. There is further evidence of Western influence in two figures with dishevelled locks (Fig. 17) which may easily be paralleled in Byzantine

15. "Two old men with a horse drinking from a stream," with a scrawled attribution, "*Kar-i* [work of] Ustad Muhammad Siyah Qalam." Later 15th century, probably Tabriz. Brush drawing, line and gouache on brownish, unsized paper. 16.7x26 cm. Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2153, fol. 113a.

and Russian icon-painting of ascetics under Venetian influence. Moreover, Julian Raby[25] has recently shown that another painting (Fig. 18) contains a figure with flying draperies clearly after a Western representation of Samson killing the lion.[26] The subject was a favourite in fifteenth-century Northern Europe, though Raby observes that in neither of the two variant drawings of Samson riding a lion, which reached Istanbul *c.* 1450 in the Jacopo Bellini sketchbook now in the Louvre,[27] is he wearing a cloak. His conclusion that figure 18 is not necessarily one of the original "Siyah Qalam" group but could have been the work of an artist in Istanbul, simultaneously imitating Siyah Qalam and modifying a European theme, faces, however, two quite serious objections. First, none of the other paintings of the group had any pronounced influence on painting at the court of Mehmed II or his successors; and secondly, stylistically it appears to be very much of a piece with the rest of the wanderer group.

Although this discussion of the wanderer paintings is inevitably sketchy, the conclusion it suggests, by elimination and by reference to what evidence there is, is that they were executed at Tabriz. The purpose for which they were originally executed is obscure, but some of them could have been adapted to the purposes of narrative illustration, while later more colouristic and less linear versions could well have been album leaves. The close relations of Akkoyunlu Tabriz with the Mediterranean would also explain why elements from Byzantine painting and northern German depictions of Samson could have come to the notice of the studio. The virtual absence of influence on Ottoman painting is sufficent to rule out Istanbul, the only plausible alternative with such strong European connections. Though I have confined my remarks to the wanderer group, the other groups, the blacks and the demons, could, with somewhat different arguments, be

16. "The div Akvan about to cast the sleeping Rustam into the Caspian." 15th century, Iran. Brush drawing, line and wash with gold details on brownish, unsized paper. 26.5x18.9 cm. Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2153, fol. 129a.

17. "Two ascetics in conversation," with a scrawled attribution, "*Kar-i* [work of] Muhammad Siyah Qalam." Later 15th century, probably Tabriz. Brush drawing, line and wash with gold details on brownish, unsized paper. 27.9x18.9 cm. Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2153, fol. 106b.

18. "A Samson figure," (after a north German prototype of *c.* 1470, detail from a sheet of vignettes). 1470s, Tabriz. Brush drawing, line and gouache on brownish, unsized paper. 15.8x28.5 cm. (sheet). Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2153, fol. 29b. The sheet of paper is of various pieces glued together, both above and at the left hand side, and may indicate that it is a scroll fragment too.

similarly associated with Tabriz. In the circumstances, however, given the striking use of *contrapposto* and other Italianate devices, it may also appear fruitful to consider the possibility that some of these subjects were done by painters acquainted with contemporary Italian drawings or prints. If part of the problem of these "Siyah Qalam" paintings is that they are culturally and technically hybrid, part of the explanation could be that one of their constituents is European.

The "Siyah Qalam" paintings evidently represent an abortive episode in the history of fifteenth-century Persian painting: the little influence they had on the court painting of the Akkoyunlu Turcomans at Tabriz was abruptly curtailed by their capture by the Ottomans. It is, however, curious that they did not have wider influence in Iran and that the whole lot, on silk or paper, scroll fragments and sketches, should have been so systematically collected into four albums (H. 2153, H. 2152, H. 2160 and H. 2154). Their often poor state suggests that they may have suffered further on their way to Istanbul but one might guess that they had been already damaged and were the residue of some larger collection destroyed by fire or flood, the treasured heirlooms of the Akkoyunlu. Damage from the elements would explain, *inter alia,* why so many have been cut down, or cut up. Notwithstanding, the demon group almost certainly inspired the animated divs and jinns in pages attributed to Sultan Muhammad in the Shah Tahmasp *Shahname.* The few paintings of the group in foreign collections were almost certainly removed from the Istanbul albums in the nineteenth century, but a particularly hideous painting of a chained demon led by two blacks (Cleveland Museum of Art, J. H. Wade Fund, 82-63) seems to be the product of another atelier. Moreover, in early Mughal painting, evidently for albums for Akbar, certain themes or individuals suggest that the painters of his studio were somehow familiar with the material in H. 2153. This material, which is widely dispersed, needs to be collected and evaluated, but it may be that the libraries of the subcontinent, which are still very poorly known, will once again reveal material to illuminate the dark history of painting in fifteenth-century Iran outside the major courts or show that the major manuscripts produced in their scriptoria were not, as they really never could have been, the whole story.

NOTES

1. Notably, his contributions to Basil Gray, ed., *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia, 14th-16th centuries* (Paris/London, 1979).
2. With L. Binyon and J. V. S. Wilkinson, *Persian Miniature Painting* (London, 1933; New York, 1971).
3. "Some problems of two Istanbul albums, H. 2153 and H. 2160" in E. J. Grube and Eleanor Sims, eds., *Between China and Iran. Paintings from four Istanbul Albums* (London, 1985), pp. 37-41. A. A. Ivanov also suggests (ibid., pp. 66-68) that a drawing of *qilins* (mythical quadrupeds) (H. 2153, fol. 170b, 2) bearing an inscription, "*amal-i* [work of] Ustad Muhammad Siyah Qalam," may also be a signature; though it is not obviously in the same hand, it is at least carefully aligned to the drawing and, from its resemblance to the signature of Shaykhi al-Ya'qubi, one of the most able painters at the court of the Akkoyunlu ruler Ya'qub Beg at Tabriz (1478-90), could be given provisionally a late fifteenth century date.
4. "Siyah Qalam" in Grube and Sims, eds., *Between China and Iran,* pp. 62-65. The effective difference between a signature and an attribution (whether learned or not) is, however, difficult to assess.
5. Ernst Kühnel, "Malernamen in den Berliner 'Saray-Alben," *Kunst des Orients* III (1959): 66-77. The signed drawings in H. 2153, some with details in colour, suggest that he was not merely a copyist of other painters' work.
6. Horst Blank, "Eine persische Pinsel-Zeichnung nach der Tazza Farnese," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1964), pp. 307-12. Though it has, quite improperly, been used to cast doubt on the authenticity of the drawings in the Diez albums, among many wholly convincing details the hair of the standing youth (Triptolemus) is treated very similarly to the angels' hair in the *Divan* of Ahmad Jala'ir (Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 32.35) which is datable *c.* 1410. It is not entirely accurate: Triptolemus has his right forearm truncated and his right leg is missing, but just as Muhammad b. Mahmudshah's drawings after copies of Yuan prototypes have a certain Chinese flavour about them, the absence of modelling here gives the drawing a neo-classical look, curiously reminiscent of Flaxman. The Tazza Farnese first became known in 1471 when it was acquired by Lorenzo de' Medici from Pope Sixtus IV, who had it from Paul II (1464-71). Its earlier history in the fifteenth century is unknown but the present drawing is evidence that it came from the East. The Timurids' well-documented taste for fine hard-stones makes it probable that it was at one time in Herat,

and possibly later in Tabriz. It is difficult to pronounce definitely where the drawing was done but it must be pre-Akkoyunlu in date.
7. Bernhard Degenhart and Annegrit Schmitt, *Corpus der italienischen Zeichnungen 1300-1450* I-IV (Berlin, 1968).
8. Grube and Sims, eds., *Between China and Iran.*
9. For a recent specimen of such reasoning cf. Emel Esin, "Muhammad Siyah Qalam and the Inner Asian Turkish tradition" in Grube and Sims, eds., *Between China and Iran,* pp. 90-105. Under the early Timurids, principally at Herat, there certainly worked a group of chancery scribes, *bakhshi,* who wrote in the Uyghur script. But these, to judge from their names and their concurrent mastery of Arabic, were Muslims not Buddhists, and the language they transcribed was Chaghatay Turkish or Turki, not Uyghur at all. Given the unsuitability of the Uyghur script for transcribing Arabic and Turkish it must have been an artificial revival, to reinforce the Timurids' claims to have inherited an ancestral Turco-Mongolian past, in which, however, Buddhism may well have played no role whatsoever.
10. Summarized in Beyhan Karamağarali, "The Siyah Qalam paintings and their relation to esoteric Muslim Sects" in Grube and Sims, eds., *Between China and Iran,* pp. 106-109. It could, of course, be argued further that "Muhammad Siyah Qalam" was a shaman too, but the implications of that do not seem to have been followed up.
11. "V. V. Bartol'd's 'The burial rites of the Turks and the Mongols' translated with an iconographic appendix by J. M. Rogers" in J. A. Boyle and K. Jahn, eds., *In Memoriam Zeki Velidi Togan* (= *Central Asiatic Journal*) XIV (Wiesbaden, 1970).
12. David Ayalon, "The Wafidiya in the Mamluk kingdom," *Islamic Culture* (Hyderabad, 1951), pp. 81-104.
13. Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo, *The Spanish embassy to Samarkand 1403-1406* (London, 1971), pp. 253-54.
14. Bernard Lewis, "Arabs and Negroes, An historical essay," *Encounter* (August 1970), pp. 18-36.
15. C. P. Haase, "Probleme der Künstlerkonzentration unter Timur in Zentralasien" in Albert J. Gail, ed., *Künstler und Werkstatt in den orientalischen Gesellschaften* (Graz, 1981), pp. 61-73.
16. Synoptic translation and commentary in W. M. Thackston, *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), pp. 279-97. Though Ghiyath al-Din is stated by 'Abd al-Razzaq Samarqandi to have been an artist of rare talent, none of his works has been identified. The report of the China embassy he presented on his return is, he states, a literary production, and the sources do not even imply that it was intended to be illustrated.
17. H. 2153, fol. 70a is basically a sketch with only a few details painted in, but it must belong to a secondary group, more polished in style and brighter in colour scheme, much closer to Akkoyunlu court painting at Tabriz e.g. H. 2160, fol. 52a, two men with a Catherine wheel; H. 2160, fol. 89a, a man on a *kursi* and a black pulling out his tongue; H. 2160, fol. 69b, bell-ringers. It may or may not be significant that most of this group are in H. 2160 and not H. 2153.
18. Cf. note 3 (H. 2153, ff. 101a, 76a—the dogs recur gambolling in a cloud-collar drawing in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 14. 542 and in the "encampment" scene, H. 2153, fol. 86. Can they be some sort of trade-mark?).
19. Cf. John E. Vollmer, "Technical and ethnic considerations of costume depictions in the Istanbul albums H. 2153 and H. 2160" in Grube and Sims, eds., *Between China and Iran,* pp. 136-44, who, on the basis of study of Asiatic costume, observes that the costumes show a number of made-up details and that none of them is observed from nature. This is a timely reminder of the danger of treating the wanderer group as journalism.
20. J. M. Rogers in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* (1978/1), pp. 171-73. In the intervening period I have come to revise my suggested dating of *c.* 1400, which now seems to be far too early, in favour of a later fifteenth-century date. Though it diminishes the possibility that the albums were booty from the Ottoman victory at Başkent in 1473, the earlier title of H. 2153 as "the Ya'qub Beg album" seems more or less accurate.
21. George P. Majeska, *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries* (Washington, DC, 1984), journey of Ignatius of Smolensk (1389), *passim.*
22. Stanley of Alderley, ed., *Travels to Tana by Josafá Barbaro and Ambrogio Contarini* (London, 1873), *passim.* The Bursa and Ankara *sicills* (judicial archives) contain numerous documents from the mid-fifteenth century onwards relating to Russian merchants engaged in the silk trade with Gilan and Mazandaran, and clearly, if such *sicills* existed for Tabriz, we should find them similarly represented.
23. The evidence is too scattered to rehearse here but, such as it is, is presented in my "Ottoman luxury trades and their regulation" in Hans-Georg Majer, ed., *Osmanistische Studien zur Wirtschafts—und Sozialgeschichte. In Memoriam Vančo Boškov* (Wiesbaden, 1986), pp. 135-55. Inside Muscovy it is highly probable that the centralized marketing documented under Ivan the Terrible in the later sixteenth century did not reflect earlier practice.
24. Cf. Nurhan Atasoy, "Four Istanbul albums and some fragments from fourteenth century Shahnamehs," *Ars Orientalis* VIII (1970): 19-48; "Illustrations displayed during Shahname recitations," *Memorial volume of the V International Congress of Iranian Art and Archaeology* II (Tehran, 1972): 262-72.
25. "Samson and Siyah Qalam" in Grube and Sims, eds., *Between China and Iran,* pp. 160-63.
26. Cf. two other related drawings of increasingly linear character (H. 2153, fol. 137b, evidently copied from it; and a westernized figure holding a snake and with a snake girdle riding a lion, H. 2152, fol. 51a).
27. Bernhard Degenhart and Annegrit Schmitt, *Jacopo Bellini, the Louvre Album of Drawings* (New York, 1984), Plate 103 (fol. 81a) showing Samson nude standing with the jawbone of the ass and the lion slain; and Plate 105 (fol. 83a) showing Samson riding the lion and breaking its jaws apart.

Changing Worlds: Bihzad and the New Painting

Thomas W. Lentz

Of all the luminaries associated with the short-lived, rarefied art known as Persian painting, none has seemed to shine brighter in posterity than the celebrated Timurid painter Ustad Kamaluddin Bihzad. Neither in known historical sources nor in the eyes of modern scholarship has any artist commanded comparable respect as an innovator or creative force (Fig. 1). Born in the mid-fifteenth century and dead by the 1530s, Bihzad was active during a half-century critical in the cultural history of the eastern Islamic world. He witnessed at close hand not only the fall of his own illustrious patrons, the Timurids, in 1506, but also the dynamic rise in their place of new, aesthetically knowledgeable imperial powers who would capitalize on the Timurid achievement.

It is against this shifting historical and political background that Bihzad's accomplishments – both real and mythical – must in part be measured, for this was a period when cultural prowess and patronage began to assume larger, more complex roles among ruling élites. The Timurids' early and expedient realization that patronage of Persian art and culture could be perceived in terms of political prestige helped transform the dynasty from a semi-nomadic Turkic military aristocracy into an envied model of urban refinement and sophistication. Their resounding success as patrons was not lost on those powerful, often untutored aspirants to power who sought both status and legitimacy in the volatile Turko-Iranian world of the early sixteenth century: the Uzbeks in Transoxiana (1500-98), the Ottomans in Turkey (1281-1924), the Safavids in Iran (1501-1732) and the Timurids' own descendants in India, the Mughals (1526-1858). Each of these militant states exploited to varying degrees the Timurid cultural legacy by manipulating some aspect of the dynasty's achievements or ideals, either through imitation, appropriation, or extrapolation. This process, which implicitly empowered the Timurids with an unassailable aura of cultural authority, only helped further to entrench the dynasty as a royal model for those in the process of assuming or enhancing power.

The Myth of Bihzad

Bihzad's own artistic legacy became an important, much coveted device in the new imperial cultural strategies of the sixteenth century, as did the artist himself. Precious little is known of his life,[1] however, and what remains for the most part are extravagant encomia of his talents and prestige from Safavid and Mughal sources, the two dynasties

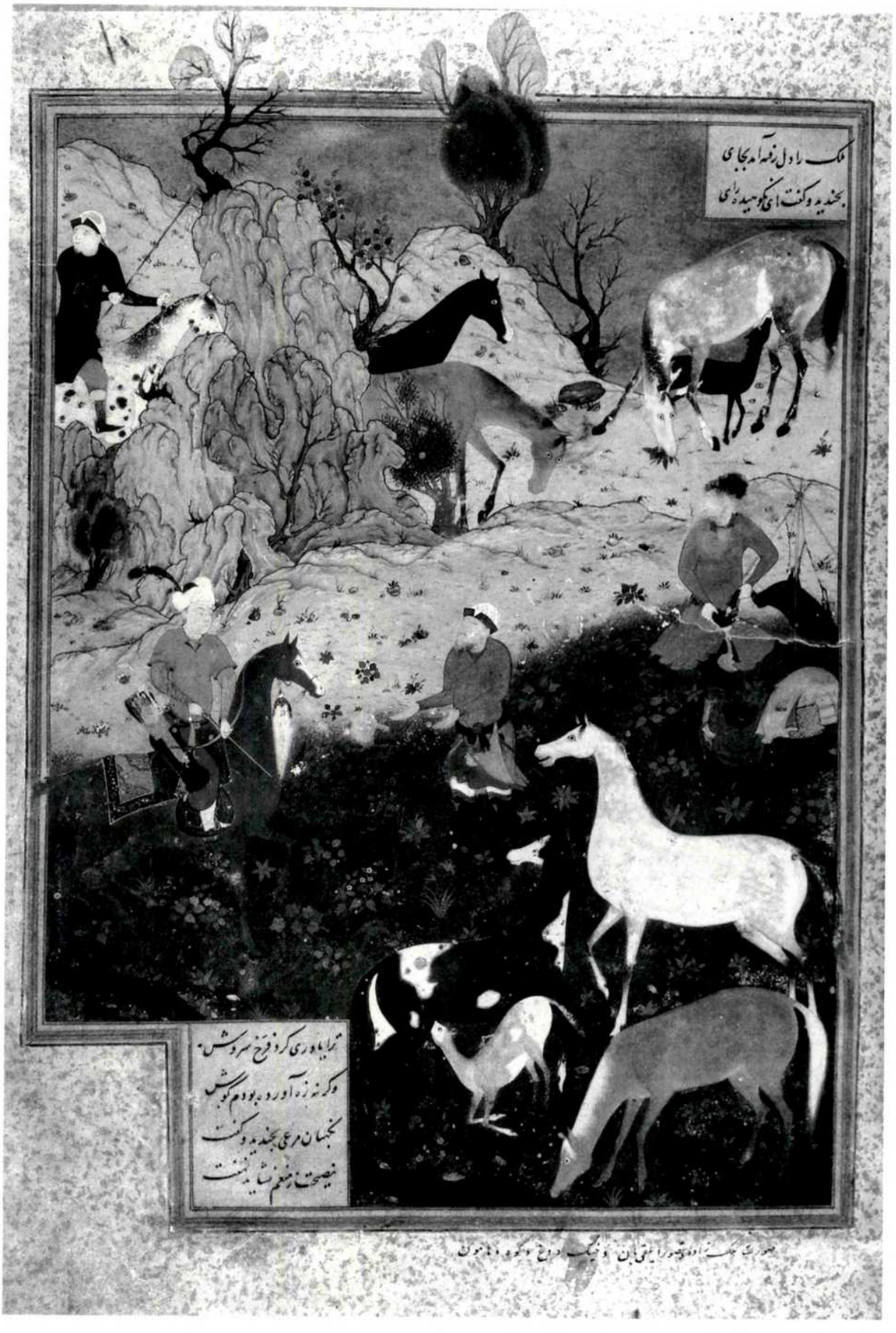
that most skilfully exploited his charisma for their own self-aggrandizing purposes. As a court painter at Herat intimately linked with the fabled lives of cultural giants like the poet Mir Ali Shir Nawa'i and Sultan Husayn Mirza, the last Timurid ruler, Bihzad came to be viewed as larger than life. He and his work were perceived as embodiments of Timurid cultural brilliance, "trophies" that represented an eagerly desired status for newly emerging patrons. This is most effectively illustrated by the Safavids' actual, physical appropriation of the artist. The importance of Shah Isma'il appointing Bihzad head of the Safavid *kitabkhana* (royal library or workshop) in 1522 at Tabriz is symbolized by the extravagant terms of his investiture decree,[2] which not only acknowledges his artistic authority but is also an early reflection of the artist's apotheosis under the Safavids. The Timurids' descendants in India, the Mughals, were even more assiduous in their use of their ancestors' cultural renown; Timurid titles, court ritual, and works of art were retained or reintroduced to buttress Mughal cultural pretensions, a point illustrated by their voracious, systematic collection of Timurid manuscripts.[3] Observations on artistic matters by the Mughal emperors themselves, together with the frequent appearance of spurious Bihzad "signatures" during their rule, further affirm the artist's almost talismanic significance in the formation of the dynasty's aesthetic profile.[4]

In this context Bihzad's actual contribution is problematic, obscured by the propagandizing tendencies of the literary sources and further compounded by controversies over the identification of his own work (Figs. 2, 3).[5] It seems unlikely that his *oeuvre* will ever be satisfactorily agreed upon by specialists, with the notable exception of one manuscript, a *Bustan* of Sa'di executed for Sultan Husayn Mirza in 1488 (Figs. 1, 4, 9), whose brilliant paintings are unanimously viewed as authentic works by Bihzad.[6] They clearly illustrate those elements that for art historians have always distinguished Bihzad and those who painted in his manner from earlier practitioners of Persian painting: originality of composition, individualization of the human figure, a heightened sense of naturalism, an interest in more realistic figural interaction and motion, and an emphasis on the depiction of everyday activities.

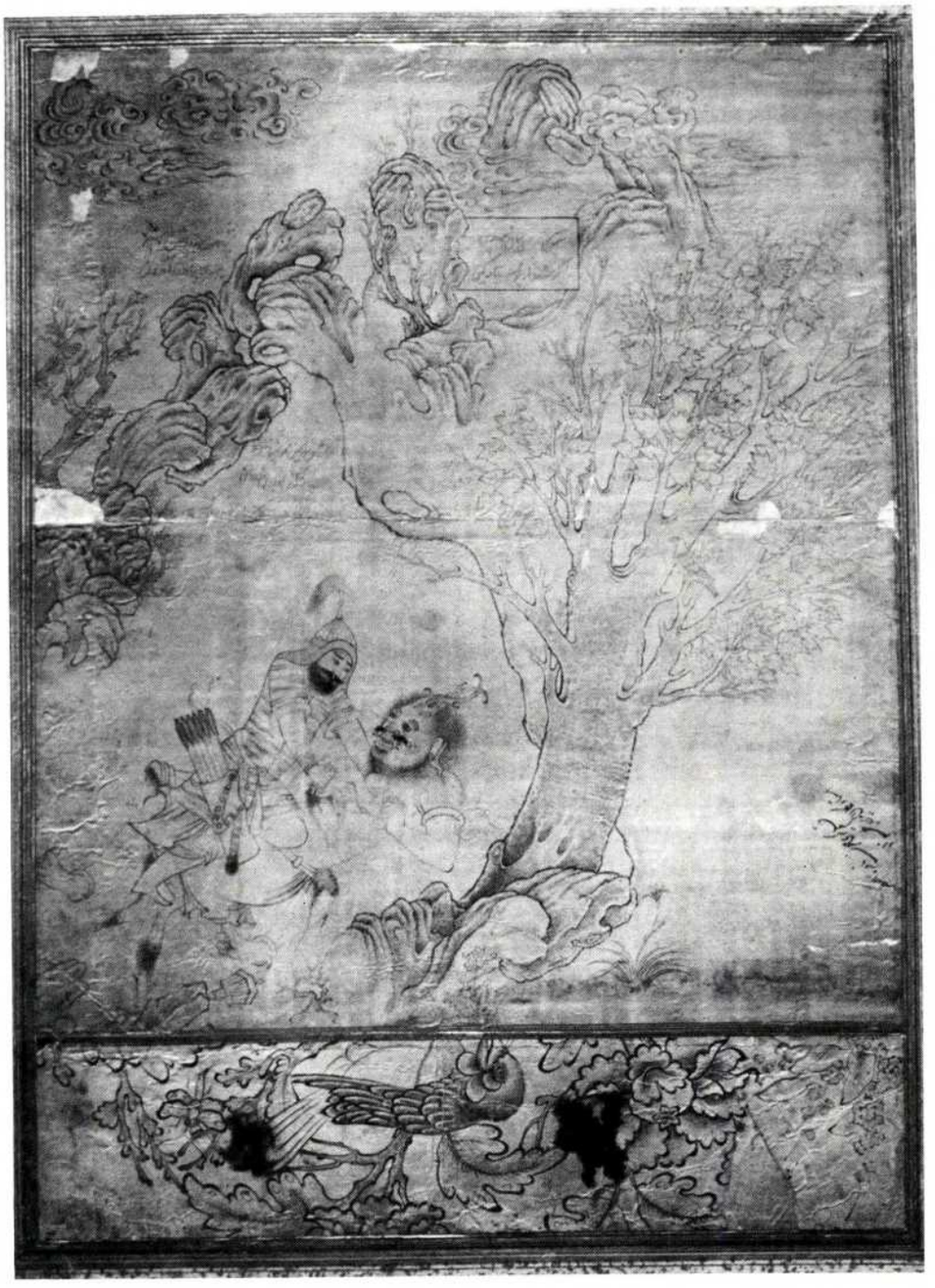
Given the problem of accurately distinguishing between the work of Bihzad and that of his contemporaries, Bihzad may best be considered simply one exponent among many — although perhaps the most brilliant — of what can be called the new painting. At the very least it is somewhat implausible to credit a single artist with every innovation of the late fifteenth century, a time when a number of perceptible changes in a highly conservative and codified art-form can indeed be charted. Yet his name stubbornly remains synonymous with these changes, the product of relentless propagandizing by later writers. More accurately Bihzad should be seen as a reformer, not a revolutionary.[7] The new painting linked to his name that emerged at Herat in the late fifteenth century stood securely within the traditional bounds of Persian manuscript illustration (Fig. 5); its internal codes and conventions, governed by the requirements of the narrative and the format of the book, were rigorously maintained. This mode, even as practised by Bihzad, was never really discarded but was instead continually modified and expanded to allow the existence of new pictorial devices.

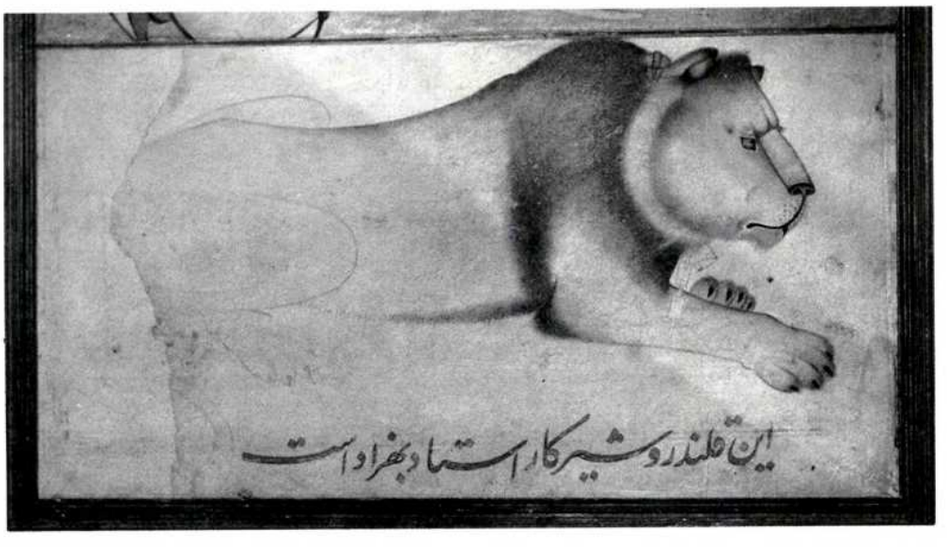
The Illustrated Book in Timurid Iran

How did the new elements found in the paintings of Bihzad and his contemporaries actually function within this restricted visual mode? What was the nature of their impact



1. "King Dara and the herdsman," Bihzad (*Bustan* of Sa'di, Adab Farsi 908). Dated A.H. Rajab 893 (June 1488), Timurid, Herat, Iran. Opaque water-colour, ink and gold on paper. 30.5 x 21.5 cm. General Egyptian Book Organization, Cairo, fol. 10a. Photo: Peter Brenner.





2. "Rustam kills the white div," Bihzad(?). First quarter of the 16th century, Iran. Ink on paper. 31.4 x 27.1 cm. Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2154, fol. 112a.

3. "A lion," Bihzad(?). First quarter of the 16th century, Iran. Opaque water-colour, ink and gold on paper. 13 x 24.4 cm. Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2154, fol. 83b.

4. "The seduction of Yusuf," Bihzad (*Bustan* of Sa'di, Adab Farsi 908). Dated A.H. Rajab 893 (June 1488), Timurid, Herat, Iran. Opaque water-colour, ink and gold on paper. 30.5 x 21.5 cm. General Egyptian Book Organization, Cairo, fol. 52b. Photo: Peter Brenner.

5. "Timur granting an audience in Balkh on the occasion of his accession to power in April, 1370," Bihzad (?) (*Zafarnama* of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi). Dated A.H. 872 (1467-68); paintings executed *c.* 1490, Timurid, Herat (?), Iran. Opaque water-colour, ink and gold on paper. 23.5 x 15.2 cm. Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, John Work Garrett Collection, ff. 82b-83a. Photo: Jeffery Crespi.

on both artist and viewer? Were they perceived as radical changes within this convention-bound form or spontaneous, cumulative developments? One can at least begin to suggest answers to some of these questions by comparing, on the most fundamental levels, the functional aspects of formal structure in earlier Timurid painting with those found in the work of Bihzad. Within this context it is critically important to recognize the potency and even the magic of painted pictures in this uniquely private art which has no true counterpart in other aesthetic traditions. Within the wider societal and theological constraints of Islamic culture, representational images as found in royal Timurid books, flawlessly executed in an array of breathtaking pigments, exercised a profound influence on their élite audience. Today Western audiences, with their

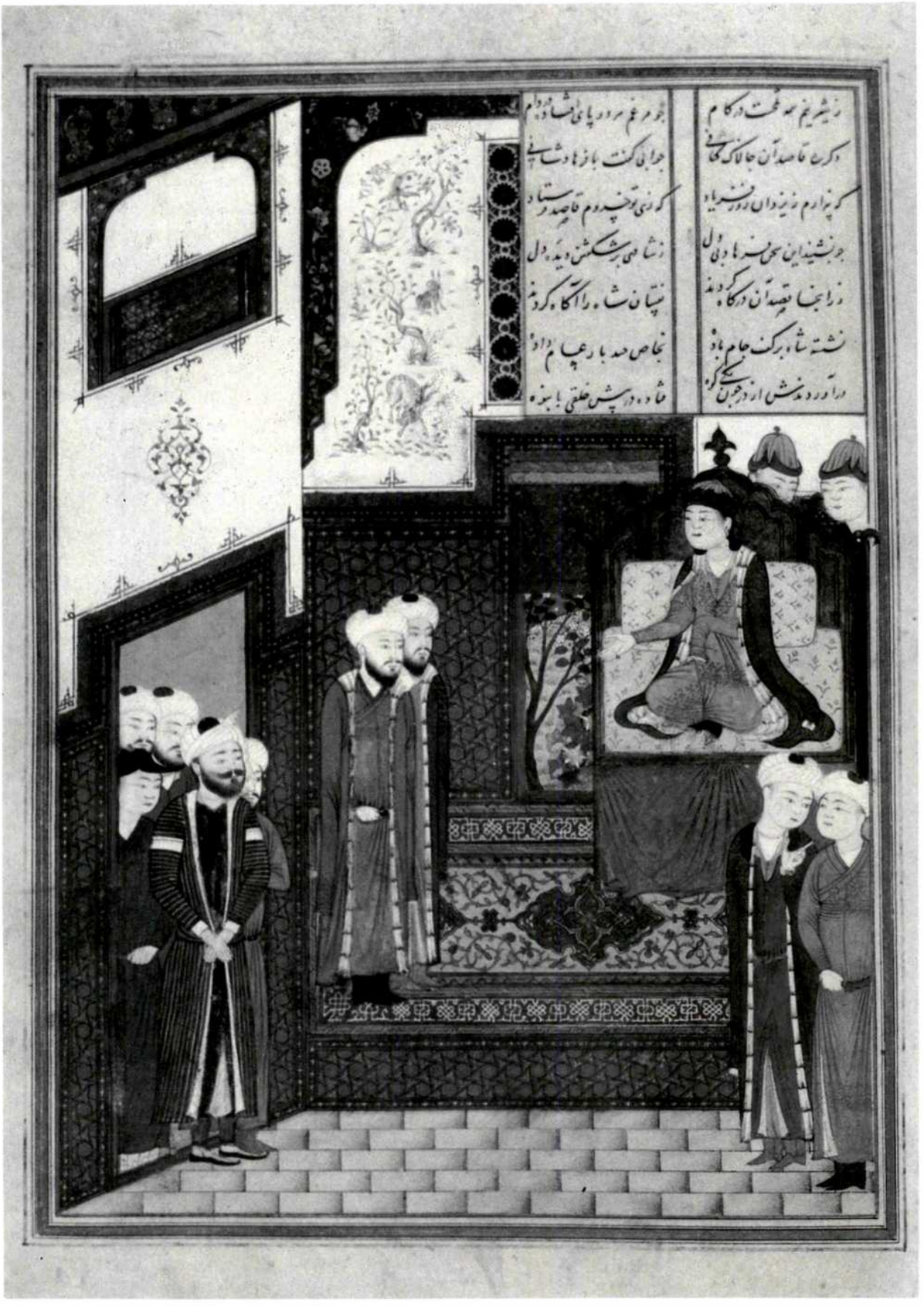
sophisticated, image-rich visual experience cumulatively derived from television, films and advertising, are likely to find the special qualities of Timurid painting difficult or too subtle to comprehend. As is generally true for Persian manuscript illustration, the formal values and attitudes dominant during any one period were encoded as formal conventions. These conventions functioned as political, cultural and social encapsulations of a perceived reality for the audience, in this case the Timurid élite. By isolating and contrasting the formal values dominant in early and late phases of Timurid painting, one can explore not only how Bihzadian painting may have operated within its restrictive parameters but also what it represented for the short history and development of Persian painting.

An orchestrated programme of artistic patronage of the ruling house was one strategy by which the invading Timurids obviated their differences of language, culture and ideology with the Islamic Iranian urban tradition that largely framed their world after Timur's death in 1405. The illustrated book conceived for royal patrons played a key role in this process, as under the Timurids it was elevated by means of lavish expense, labour and imagination to the rank of a precious object, one capable of assuming rich layers of meaning. Under the direction of the *kitabkhana*, a unified, consistent and decidedly contrived vision was disseminated in the royal house during the first half of the fifteenth century. A typical illustration of a court scene from a mid-1440s royal copy of a *Khamsa* of Nizami underlines the frozen, formal equilibrium achieved by the Timurid workshops and desired by the princes of the royal house (Fig. 6). Here is found the artificial "reality" so typical of early Timurid painting at Herat: a flat, two-dimensional conception of space, idealized figures, brilliant, often unrealistic colours, and a highly ordered, balanced composition whose main feature seems to be not movement but stasis. These highly controlled images, mostly reliant on convention and formalism for visual impact within their limited, enclosed spaces, make no real attempts at an illusionistic representation of the physical world. The central fact of this painting is its clear, perceptible allegiance to the idea of an artificial, staged environment that is theatrical in its presentation, an effect which immediately transfers the forms and intentions of the painting to metaphorical levels.

As has often been cited, this highly stereotyped language of early Timurid painting frequently functioned as a celebratory affirmation of the ruling élite and their world (Fig. 7).[8] Reliant upon the simple philosophical notion that what is seen depends on what is being looked for, the symbolic tableaux of royal pomp and pageantry that dominated early court painting at Herat communicated an idealized experience, one the Timurids envisioned for themselves. The key to this process was a response to conventionalized subjects – courtly figures, princes slaying beasts, garden enthronements – that set off in the viewer's experience or perception an order of meaning. Rather than imitation of the surface aspects of material reality – modelling, perspective, illusionistic colour – a perfect, designed reality was pursued by Timurid artists. In this context, early Timurid painting in manuscripts embraced an artificial vocabulary, one that its selective, élite audience was predisposed to see as both valid and meaningful.

The New Painting

Given these parameters, painting in books as conceived by the Timurids assumed the properties of a highly sophisticated, autonomous language. In its imaginative use of



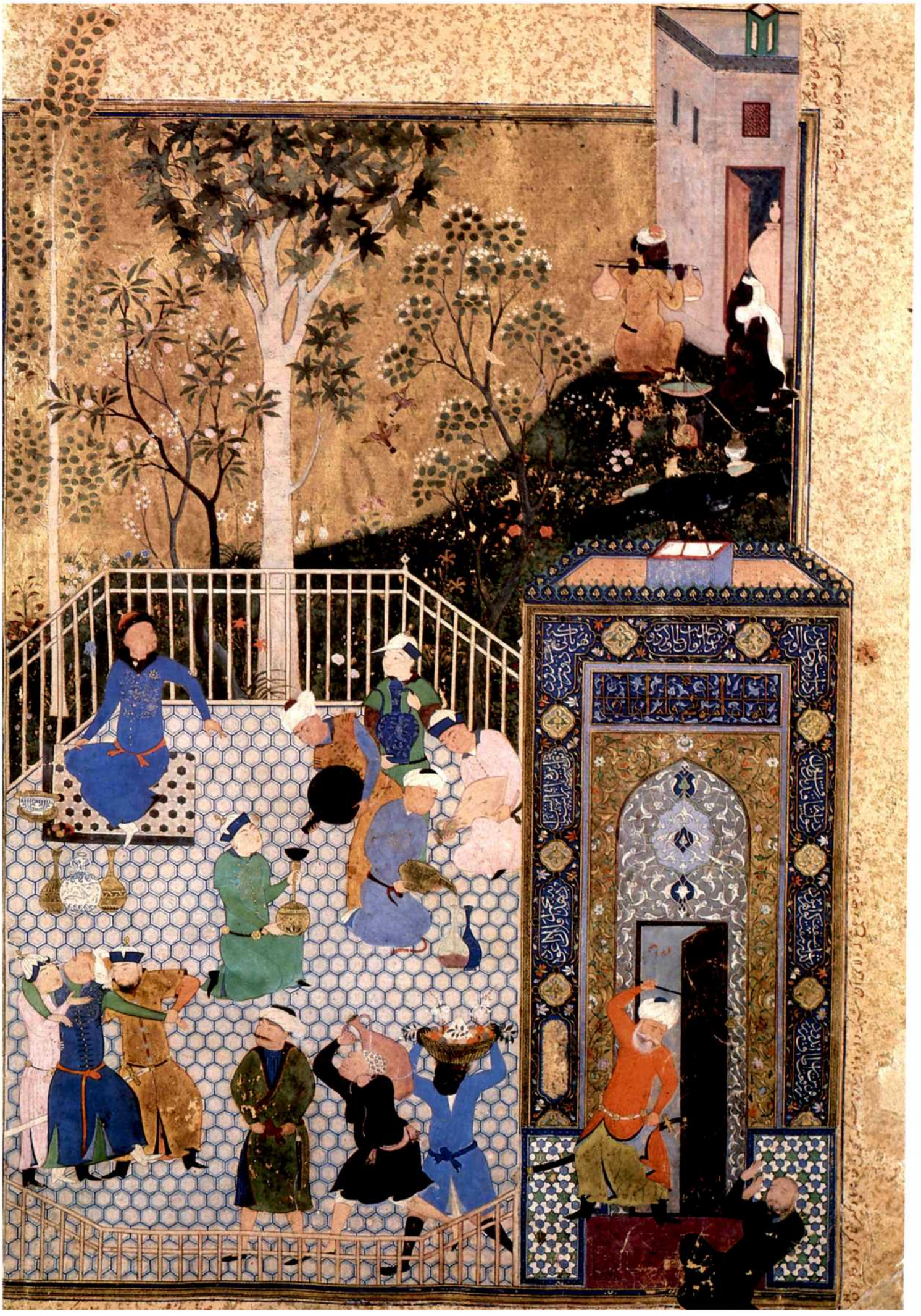
6. "Khusraw receives Farhad," (*Khamsa* of Nizami, H. 781). Dated A.H. 849 (1445-46), Timurid, Herat, Iran. Opaque water-colour, ink and gold on paper. 24.1 × 16 cm. Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul H. 781, fol. 62a. Photo: Peter Brenner.

7. "Humay and Humayun in a garden" (possibly from an *Anthology*). *c.* 1430. Timurid, Herat (?), Iran. Opaque water-colour, ink and gold on paper. 29 x 17.5 cm. Collection Musée les Arts Décoratifs, Paris. Photo: L. Sully-Jaulmes.

8. "Two seated men," mounted on an album page, Bihzad (?). *c.* 1480-90. Timurid, Herat (?), Iran. Ink on paper. 39.1 x 27.6 cm. Harvard University Art Museums (Arthur M. Sackler Museum), Cambridge, 1972. 299.

9. "A party at the court of Sultan Husayn Mirza," Bihzad (*Bustan* of Sa'di, Adab Farsi 908). Dated A. H. Rajab 893 (June 1488), Timurid, Herat, Iran. Opaque water-colour, ink and gold on paper. 30.5 x 21.5 cm. General Egyptian Book Organization, Cairo, ff. 1b-2a. Photo: Peter Brenner. ►

convention and stereotyped imagery, Timurid painting also exhibits striking parallels to traditional Persian poetics.[9] This basic conceptual framework, while intact throughout the latter part of the fifteenth century, was also receptive to the idiomatic developments associated with Bihzad. It has been demonstrated, for example, that despite the new innovations, compositional and figural elements of early fifteenth-century painting were repeatedly maintained.[10] Yet these innovations also subtly altered the nature of manuscript illustration, and for the most part are related to the thorny issue of "realism" in Persian painting (Fig. 8). The quiet but unmistakable turn toward physical reality in Bihzad's painting would remain a matter of degree, however, as the traditional Persianate literary and artistic adherence to the notion of the ideal never fully retreated before this new shift in focus and expression.



Numerous reasons for the appearance of this new, limited realism have been suggested, ranging from the increased interest in mysticism at Sultan Husayn's court to the declining political fortunes of the dynasty that drastically altered its rule and vision of patronage.[11] But what were the actual effects on the Timurid viewer of a less abstract and more representational mode of illustration? How did these new elements affect the icon-like visual façade so carefully contrived in accordance with Timurid ideology of the early century? How did artists respond to this challenge?

Of all the new aspects of Bihzadian painting, the most telling in this regard was the implementation of specific techniques of naturalism. Evidence of it can be found in earlier Timurid painting,[12] and while its increased use in Bihzadian painting cannot be construed as an effort similar to that found in Western painting, the consistent appearance of shading, perspective and modulated colours within the ideal frame of Timurid painting signalled a profound change of dimension (Fig. 9). These elements restored for the first time since the fourteenth century a temporal context to Persian painting, and the implications of this development were wide-ranging. Earlier Timurid painting, while nominally representational, reveals a disinterest in the use of light, shade and perspective — features suggestive of physical reality — in favour of a clarity and precision of design. Physical appearances were transformed, as were emotion and expression, into a conventional scheme. Emphatically demonstrated in the painting of Bihzad is a renewed interest in the transitory, physical aspect of reality. A new sense of colour, motion and space transformed conceptual abstractions into more immediate, personal images that frankly acknowledged the existence of living counterparts behind ideal forms.

Reduction or enhancement of an image's representational qualities invariably leads to different readings of that image. Unlike earlier painting with its formal and structural affinities to poetic composition that leads one to look beyond the representational for meaning, Bihzadian painting firmly guides the eye back toward the specifics of temporal and physical reality (Fig. 10). Rather than the physical and emotional detachment of flat, idealized conventions, figures and objects are now more convincingly grounded in space. Emotions and psychological interplay are recorded that would have previously been deemed inappropriate, not to mention counterproductive, to the effect of an image. When looking at Bihzadian painting, the viewer is no longer confronted with an eternal, synthetic world but with a subtly realistic one that is temporally structured, with events unfolding as they occur in time. It is particularly significant to note that once these images are no longer articulated as timeless icons, the abstract, formalist façade of earlier painting begins to vanish (Fig. 11). Even with this admittedly slight nod to a palpable, recognizable reality, these images of Bihzad and his followers have drawn the viewer immeasurably closer to the physical world.

A twentieth-century viewer may find it difficult to ascribe these somewhat spectacular properties to mere manuscript illustration, small and restricted in audience. This view, however, would ignore not only the role that books in general played in Islamic culture but also the importance of illustrated manuscripts as ideological vehicles for Timurid patrons. More significantly, it would fail to acknowledge the special aesthetic qualities intrinsic to the "miniature." Paradoxically, the small dimensions of manuscript illustration endow it with an aesthetic and communicative ability far out of proportion to its actual size, a quality normally ascribed to far larger works such as monumental sculpture or architecture. Reduction of scale always entails the loss of certain dimensions; in the case of manuscript illustration, volume, for example, regardless of the degree of its

10. "The Timurid army attacks the survivors of the town of Nerges in Georgia, Bihzad(?) (*Zafarnama* of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi). Da A.H. 872 (1467-68); painti executed *c.* 1490, Timurid, Herat (?), Iran. Opaque wa colour, ink and gold on pa 23.5 x 15.2 cm. Johns Hop University, Baltimore, Milt S. Eisenhower Library, Joh Work Garrett Collection, ff. 282b-283a. Photo: Jeffery Crespi.

"realistic" properties, is drastically altered. It has been observed, however, that this decrease in scale also triggers off a reversal in the process of perception or understanding. Quantitatively diminished, the contents of an image appear qualitatively simplified and less formidable.[13] In other words, the world it represents becomes more accessible, enhanced and suddenly within reach of the viewer.

11. "Construction of the Masjid-i Jami'in Samarkand," Bihzad (?) (*Zafarnama* of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi). Dated A.H. 872 (1467-68); paintings executed *c.* 1490. Timurid, Herat(?), Iran. Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper. 23.5 x 15.2 cm. Johns Hopkins University Baltimore, Milton S. Eisenhower Library, John Work Garrett Collection, ff. 359b-360a. Photo: Jeffery Crespi.

An Altered Vision

The unique properties of manuscript illustration in combination with the paramount role of the book in Muslim culture provided the Timurids with a potent tool in the formation of a dynastic self-image. The idealized, princely image created in painting served the early Timurids well as they maintained the illusion of empire during the first half of the fifteenth century – giving pleasure, increasing prestige, affirming aspirations. This brash, illusory façade contrived by the ruling house rapidly crumbled during the second half of the century, a casualty of new political realities. Shrinking borders, violent internal fighting, the encroachments of rival Turkic groups in the east and west, a shrinking state treasury – these factors revealed the once-mighty dynasty as little more than a house of cards.[14]

Painting consequently reflected in part something of a retreat to another reality. As the dynasty turned inward, the imperial, iconic qualities of painting were largely refashioned by naturalistic devices that broke the idealized, eternal moment. Bihzad and his contemporaries, like their predecessors in the Timurid *kitabkhana,* fashioned another world for their patrons, but one that now acknowledged both the existence of human emotions and frailties as well as the physical reality of this world. The new popularity of mystical texts for illustration during this period introduced fresh narrative requirements and themes into the *kitabkhana,* needing a different visualization; meditations on death, mourning, and other philosophical questions, which so often drew their metaphorical images from the transitory world, were adroitly articulated with the aid of the new naturalism. The advent of common people and everyday activities as standard subjects of painting during this time can also be seen in part as a reaction by artists to the oppressive, emotional and expressive constraints of an imperial painting tradition.

Bihzad and his contemporaries responded to the shifting fortunes and tastes of their royal patrons by imaginatively modifying the visual language of the illustrated book. They provided the means by which manuscript illustration, freed of the political and dynastic shackles that dictated a uniform, iconic imagery, could directly respond to change. By avoiding atrophy and reinventing itself, Persian painting extended its creative boundaries. Here may reside the true genius of Bihzad and his contemporaries for they simultaneously maintained and advanced the unique character of Persian manuscript painting.

NOTES

1. R. Ettinghausen, "Bihzad" in *The Encyclopedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., pp. 1211-12.
2. M. M. Qazwini and L. Bouvat, "Deux documents inédits relatif Behzad" in *Revue du monde Musulman* 26 (1914): 159-61.
3. M. Brand and G. Lowry, *Akbar's India: Art from the Mughal City of Victory* (New York, 1985), pp. 87-92.
4. Ettinghausen, "Bihzad," p. 1212; see also the *Haft Paykar* manuscript in the Metropolitan Museum as described in A. Jackson and A. Yohannon, *A Catalogue of the Collection of Persian Manuscripts* (New York, 1914), pp. 71-79.
5. B. W. Robinson, "Bihzad and his School: The Materials" in *Marg,* vol. XXX, no. 2 (March 1977), pp. 51-75.
6. M. Mostafa, *Miniatures of the School of Bihzad* (Baden-Baden: Waldemar Klein, 1960).
7. B. W. Robinson, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Persian Paintings in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1958), p. 64.
8. P. Soucek, "Illustrated Manuscripts of Nizami's Khamsa, 1386-1482" (Ph.D. diss., Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1971), pp. 368-69.
9. E. Yarshater, "Some Common Characteristics of Persian Poetry and Art" in *Studia Islamica* 16 (1962): 61-71.
10. M. Lukens-Swietochowski, "The School of Herat from 1450 to 1506" in *The Arts of the Book in Central Asia, 14th-16th Centuries* (Boulder and Paris, 1979), pp. 179-214.
11. R. Milstein, "Sufi Elements in Late Fifteenth-Century Painting at Herat" in M. Rosen-Ayalon, ed., *Studies in Memory of Gaston Wiet* (Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 357-69; T. Lentz and G. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, DC, 1989), pp. 239-301.
12. See, for example, the foreshortened horseman at the bottom of "Isfandiyar slays Arjasp in the brazen hold" from a *Shahnama* dated 1430 and now in Tehran: *The Survey of Persian Art* (Oxford, 1939), pl. 874.
13. C. Lévi-Strauss, "The Science of the Concrete" in C. F. Jopling, ed., *Art and Aesthetics in Primitive Societies* (New York, 1971), pp. 240-41.
14. H. R. Roemer, "The Successors of Timur" in *The Cambridge History of Iran,* 6 (Cambridge, 1986): 111-25.

Sultan Muhammad Tabrizi: Painter at the Safavid Court

Priscilla Soucek

Sultan Muhammad Tabrizi or Iraqi was one of the most important painters at the Safavid court in Tabriz during the reign of Shah Tahmasp, and his paintings are both distinctively individual as well as revealing of the artistic and political climate in which he lived and worked. Two phases of his work are discernible: an early one where his ties to pre-Safavid painting in western Iran are evident, and a second phase which reflects new compositional trends at the Safavid court. The chief documents of his early career are paintings from the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp, now divided among a number of private and public collections,[1] and the principal evidence of his later work is a *Divan* of Hafiz in which one painting contains the name of Shah Tahmasp's brother Sam Mirza.[2] Neither group of Sultan Muhammad's paintings is precisely dated, but those from the *Shahnama* are probably earlier than 934/1527-28, whereas those from the *Divan* may have been painted between 1531 and 1533.[3]

The Early Paintings of Sultan Muhammad

All available literary evidence suggests that Sultan Muhammad was trained as a painter in Tabriz, for his earliest known paintings show a debt to the traditions of that centre.[4] The earliest documented painting by this artist, a scene of figures clad in animal skins representing the first Iranian ruler Gayumars and his court, from the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp, epitomizes the individualistic features of western Iranian painting; its consummate mastery suggests that it must be the work of a mature artist.[5] This painting is striking for the way figures are grouped in an open coil which serves to place them in space and to draw attention to Gayumars and his son, both larger in scale than the figures in front of them. More people are tucked away in the brilliantly coloured rocks which frame the central group. Despite the complexity of the rock formations, a careful modulation of colour makes the outline of individual elements perceptible. Sultan Muhammad also uses a distinctive canon of proportion in drawing human figures—a wide face, narrow shoulders, elongated torso and unusually small hands and feet—which is particularly evident in the standing figures of this composition. "The court of Gayumars" shows Sultan Muhammad's ability to use compositions that are crowded with details but in which a well

articulated structure and careful use of colour make each element discernible. The kinship of this painting with several others in this *Shahnama* such as "The feast of Sadeh," "Tahmuras defeats the divs" and "Hushang kills the black div," suggests they too were painted by Sultan Muhammad.[6]

Here discussion will focus on two of those paintings, "Tahmuras defeats the divs" and "The feast of Sadeh," both of which are now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Figs. 1, 4). These paintings share similar stylistic and compositional features. In each of them, the main figures placed in a clearing are flanked by subordinate figures and framed with a border of richly coloured rocks. The scene of "Tahmuras defeats the divs," is particularly useful for understanding the sources of Sultan Muhammad's style and its links with the earlier paintings from both Shiraz and Tabriz.

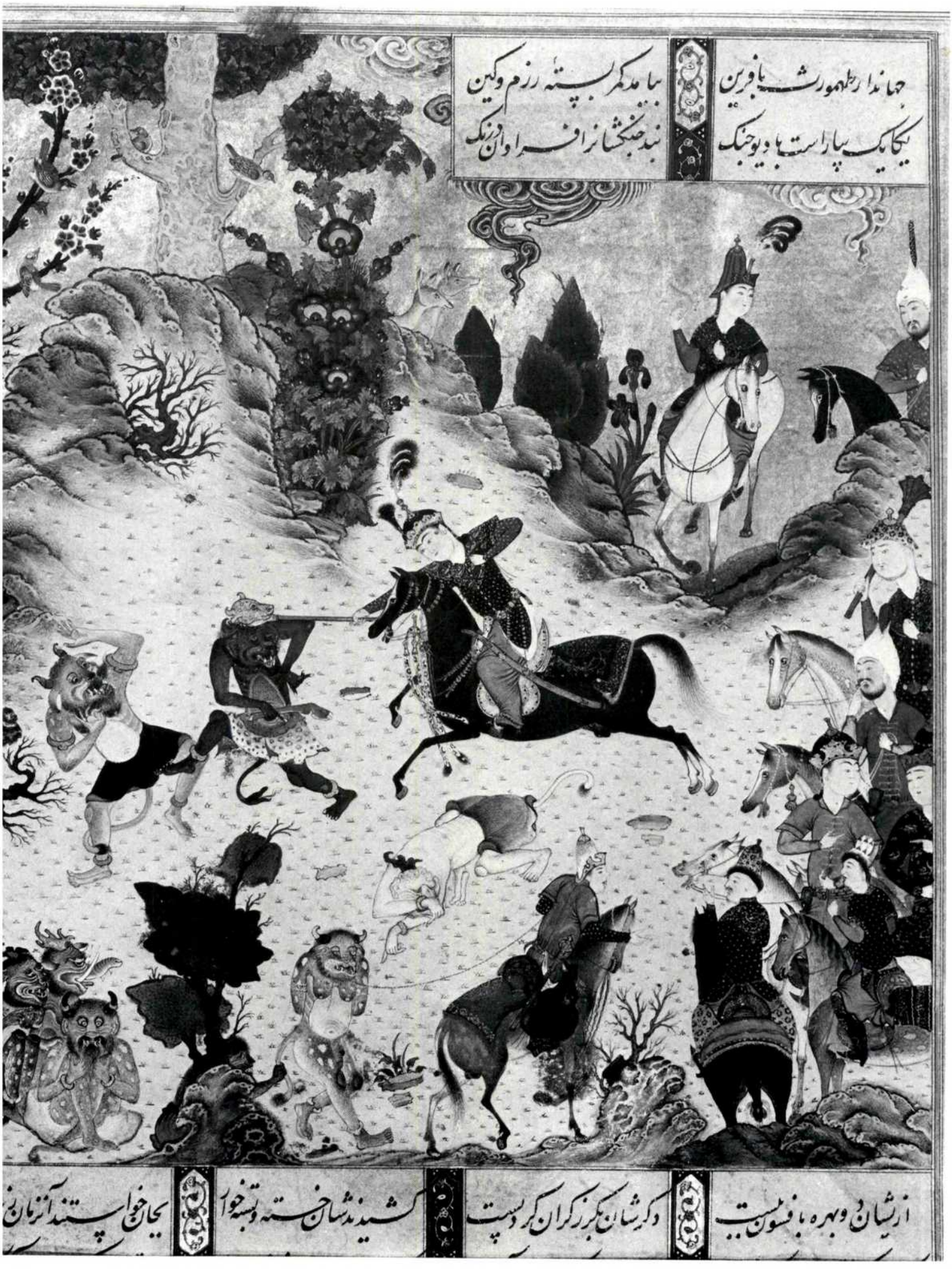
Demonic creatures have an important place in the imagination of Iran and were thought to lurk in rocky outcroppings or desert regions, ready to seize unsuspecting travellers. They also figure prominently in Iranian literature as the antagonists of heroes, such as Tahmuras. In this composition Sultan Muhammad builds upon a well-established pictorial tradition by portraying demons with a mixture of human and animal features.[7] A combat with demons, from a dispersed manuscript of the *Khavarnama,* dated to 881/1476 and probably painted in Shiraz, demonstrates Sultan Muhammad's debt to this tradition (Fig. 2).[8] The two paintings share many general features of composition such as the postures of the protagonists and the way in which the demons are characterized, but Sultan Muhammad's work has a higher level of pathos and emotional expression. His demons have an almost human range of emotions as they recoil from the hero's blows. He also rings the central scene with human spectators whose gestures and placement help to give depth to the scene.

The landscape setting of Sultan Muhammad's painting is also much richer in colour and detail than that of the *Khavarnama* painting. The scattered rock formations of the earlier work lack the visual drama of the rocky border, in shades of pink, mauve and aqua, with which Sultan Muhammad frames his scene. Another noteworthy element is the flowering tree with a pair of birds resting on its branches in the upper left corner of his painting. This vignette bears a striking resemblance to several paintings preserved in an Istanbul album, H. 2153, that were probably executed in Tabriz *c.* 1480, in which birds perch on a flowering branch (Fig. 3). Some examples combine this branch with three figures in Chinese dress.[9] It is possible that Sultan Muhammad has included the tree with birds as a "quotation" from such a painting.

The general composition of "The feast of Sadeh" has close analogies to the painting of Gayumars and his court. Here too, the chief protagonists clustered in the centre of the painting in a triangular formation and stressed by their larger scale are contrasted with numerous smaller secondary figures, and colourful rock formations define areas of the composition.

Close analogies to Sultan Muhammad's style and compositions are found in a group of paintings probably executed in Tabriz during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[10] Sultan Muhammad's use of scale to emphasize the central figures of a painting and his habit of integrating their attendants in the landscape setting are closely paralleled in several paintings from a copy of Nizami's *Khamsa,* now in the Topkapi Museum Library, Hazine 762, including the scene of "Khusraw's lion combat."[11] In that painting, too, the ring of spectators is carefully integrated with the

1. "Tahmuras defeats the
Sultan Muhammad (Firda
Shahnama). The Metropol
Museum of Art, New Yorl
Gift of Arthur A. Houghto
Jr., 1970, 1970. 301.3.


جهاندار طهمورث با فرین
بیامد کمر بستهٔ رزم و کین
یکایک بیاراست با دیو جنگ
بند جنگشان را فراوان درنگ
ازیشان دو بهره بافسون ببست
دگرشان بگرز گران کرد پست
کشیدندشان خسته و بسته خوار
بجان خواستند آن زمان

landscape setting, and the composition is framed in a rim of multicoloured rocks. The central figures are drawn in a canon of proportion very similar to that later used by Sultan Muhammad. The faces of Khusraw and Shirin appear to have been completed by a Safavid painter and are very similar to those in Sultan Muhammad's paintings from Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama.* Another painting from Hazine 762, depicts the meeting of Sultan Sanjar and an old woman. Here all the principal figures are very close to those in Sultan Muhammad's paintings, not only in their proportions but also in the use of large areas of blue, orange and red for their garments.[12] This colour scheme is particularly evident in his painting of "The feast of 'Id" (Figs. 8, 9). The principal difference between these illustrations and Sultan Muhammad's paintings for the *Shahnama* is in the pastel tones used for the landscape setting. More vivid hues are, however, found in some other paintings from Hazine 762. The scene of "Iskandar and the dying Dara" is set against hillocks in orange, mauve, turquoise, gold and green and also has a framing rim of multicoloured rocks (Fig. 5).

This manuscript, one of the most original produced in fifteenth-century Iran, has a discursive postscript to the text which was probably added to enhance its prestige when it was presented to Shah Isma'il in the early sixteenth century by one of his high officials, Amir Najm al-din Mas'ud Zargar Rashti.[13] A goldsmith by training, Najm al-din Mas'ud was one of Shah Isma'il's earliest and most fervent supporters and rose eventually to be his chief official or *vakil.* He was an important link between the young ruler and the cultural and administrative traditions of Iran.[14] His connection with Hazine 762 suggests that manuscript patronage at the Safavid court was not solely the prerogative of the ruler.

In addition to the binding and this postscript, several of the illustrations of the manuscript were wholly or partially painted in the Safavid period, including "Iskandar and the dying Dara" as well as some details in "Khusraw's lion combat" and "Sultan Sanjar and the old woman." This phase probably occurred *c.* 1505, the date found on a painting removed from the manuscript several decades ago.[15] Unfortunately, the names of the two or three different painters involved are not recorded, but Sultan Muhammad may well have been among them.

An analysis of Sultan Muhammad's paintings from the *Shahnama* shows his debt to the special artistic climate of Tabriz and underscores the continuity of taste which links the first decades of the Safavid era with that of the Aq Qoyunlus. The parallels between certain details in his paintings and materials from the albums now in Istanbul also suggest that he had access to those paintings or others which closely resembled them.

Sultan Muhammad and the *Divan* of Hafiz

Evidence for Sultan Muhammad's personal evolution during the reign of Shah Tahmasp is found primarily in a single manuscript, a copy of the *Divan* of Hafiz. This volume lacks a colophon, but does contain one illustration signed by Shaykhzada that depicts a group of people listening to the exhortations for repentance in a mosque, and two signed by Sultan Muhammad (Figs. 6, 8).[16] One of these portrays an enthroned prince surrounded by his courtiers celebrating the end of Ramadan (Figs. 8, 9), the other a tavern and a group of intoxicated celebrants (Fig. 6).

The *Divan* illustrations differ significantly from those in the *Shahnama.* In "The

fights demons"
mad b. Husam al-Din's
ama). Chester
ibrary and Gallery of
Art, Dublin, Pers.
, no. 1.

feast of 'Id," Sultan Muhammad uses a canon of figural proportion that is close to the norm for Safavid painting but with wider shoulders and less elongated torsos (Figs. 8, 9). Several participants in the drinking scene, however, have unusually large heads and narrow shoulders, a detail which may be intended to give the painting an air of caricature (Fig. 6).

The most striking feature of Sultan Muhammad's paintings from the *Divan* is the way architecture is used to structure and unify the compositions. In one, the tavern is an octagonal kiosk with two storeys of rooms. It has an entrance and balcony which project to the left (Fig. 6). The building in "The feast of 'Id" also appears to be a polygonal pavilion; the seated prince is framed by an arch, a woman peeks out of a second-storey window, and attendants are visible through a door to the right (Fig. 8).

Several other Safavid paintings show figures in a polygonal building—including "The nightmare of Zahhak" and "Firdausi proves his talent before Sultan Mahmud" from Shah Tahmasp's *Shahnama,* both of which have been attributed to Mir Musavvir.[17] Another useful comparison is "Khusraw and Shirin after their wedding feast" from a manuscript of Nizami's *Khamsa* now in the John Rylands Library, Manchester,[18] illustrated *c.* 1530, that is a simplified replica of Zahhak's nightmare from the Tahmasp *Shahnama* (Fig. 7). In all cases, the composition is dominated by a polygonal kiosk with figures on three levels who are unified by their reaction to a single event.

In Sultan Muhammad's painting, the figures are united by the act of drinking and its effect. At the centre of the painting is a man, perhaps intended to represent Hafiz, who appears to be offering a book, possibly of his poetry, to a youth in exhange for a flask of wine. This theme of drinking is also stressed by the group of angels on the building's roof, and by a single line of text which describes how one angel gives another a cup of wine, causing her face to become flushed. This gesture is repeated by the celebrants within and in front of the tavern. The eccentric behaviour and casual grouping of celebrants before the tavern is intended to convey the varied ways in which different people react to the wine. The painting also contains small touches of order such as the neat row of cups and flasks placed over the door of the chamber holding the wine vessels.

The painting illustrates an important theme in the poetry of Hafiz, drawing a parallel between drinking and the source of creative inspiration behind the writing of poetry. In this composition Sultan Muhammad has linked elements mentioned by Hafiz in various verses of the ghazal.[19] The setting is described as the *saray-i mughan,* the residence of Magians or Fire-Worshippers. In this case the light is provided not by a sacred fire but by the glittering cups of wine and the radiant faces of beautiful youths. The participation of angels in the celebration alludes among other things to the pleasures of paradise.

Although at first sight this painting appears strikingly different from the scenes in the *Shahnama* mentioned above, a closer examination suggests some points of comparison. Most notable is the conception of human anatomy seen, for instance, in the bearded musician to the left of the centre. He has the large head, narrow shoulders and small hands of figures in Sultan Muhammad's illustrations for the *Shahnama* (Figs. 4, 6). Also, several figures in the middle zone of the painting are considerably larger in scale than those in the foreground.

"The feast of 'Id" has two focal points; the most obvious is the youthful prince on his throne silhouetted against a golden ground and surrounded by courtiers, a

3. "Blossoming branch with birds and butterflies." Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul, Hazine 2153, fol. 5lb.

second is the faint silhouette of a new moon visible in the upper left corner of the painting (Figs. 8, 9). This appearance of a new moon signals the end of Ramadan and several figures on the roof have their hands raised in prayer. A line from Hafiz inscribed on the wall of the building links and contrasts these two themes:

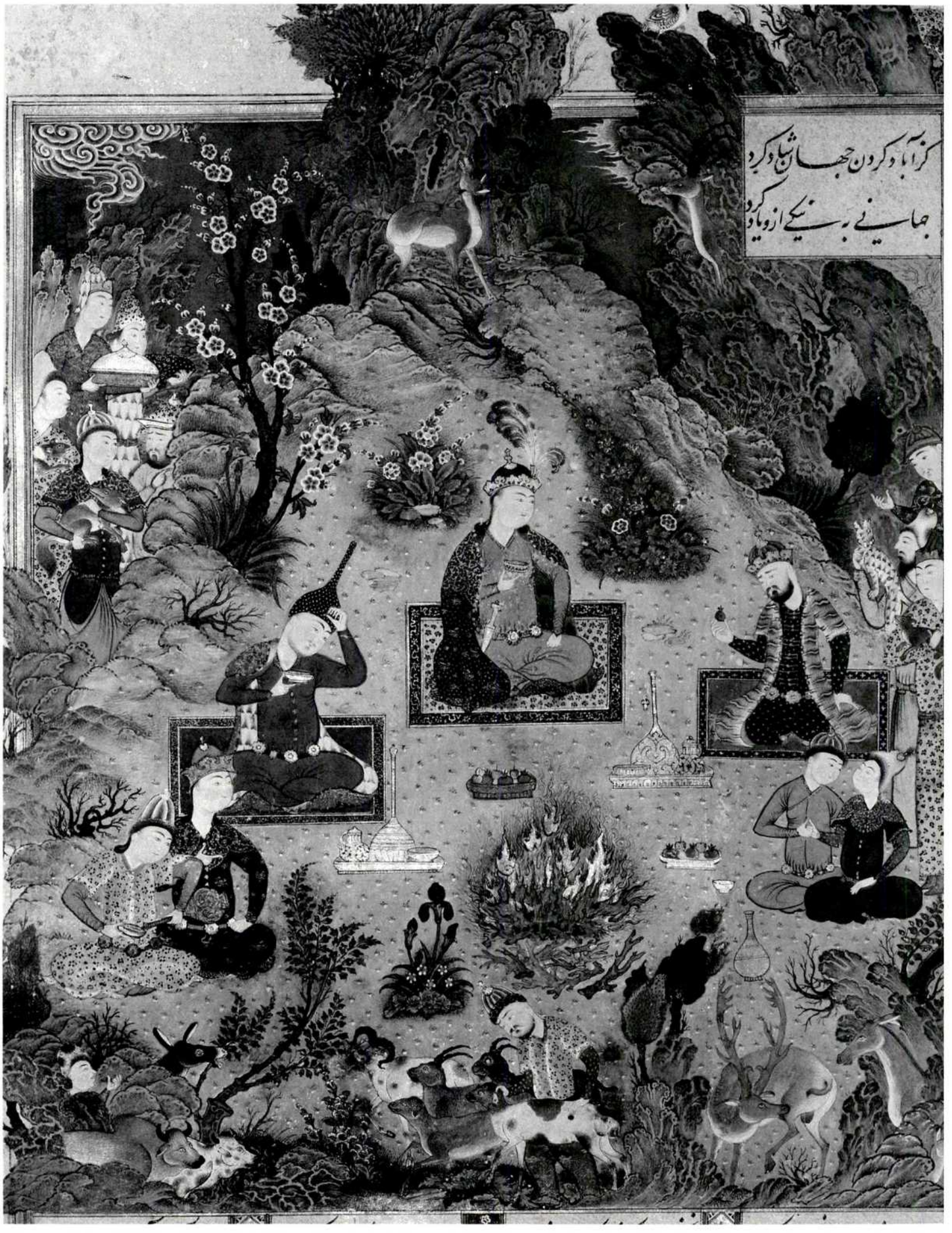
It's the 'Id and a time for roses—and a goodly company await.

Saqi: See the moon in the face of the Shah—and bring the wine.[20]

The face of the shah is compared with the new moon which signals the end of Ramadan. Another element in this verse, the coincidence of the 'Id with the blooming of roses, is represented by several figures who pick or hold roses.

The use of an architectural setting to frame a royal celebration was popular with Safavid painters, and Sultan Muhammad's painting can be compared with one of "Khusraw enthroned" from a copy of Nizami's *Khamsa* made for Shah Tahmasp.[21] Both paintings show a royal figure enthroned beneath an arch, and both allude to a garden setting by showing cypresses and poplars in rhythmic alternation across the top of the picture. There are also, however, important differences between their compositions. The *Khamsa* painting has a radial structure with lines of courtiers focused on the central seated ruler, whereas in the *Divan* illustration the composition is an open coil with the prince at its centre, a scheme reminiscent of Sultan Muhammad's painting "The court of Gayumars."

GALLERY OF ART


کز آباد کردن جهان شاد گردد
جهانی به نیکی از و یاد گردد

Illustrations showing royal audiences often have a double message in manuscripts made for princely patrons—on the one hand they depict an event mentioned in the text, and on the other they convey a message about the manuscript's patron. Thus, the *Khamsa* illustration shows Khusraw's accession to the throne at the Sassanian palace known as "Taq-i Kisra" (Khusraw's Vault), located near modern Baghdad, but in a metaphorical sense it also celebrates the accession of Shah Tahmasp, whose lineage and titles are inscribed on the building's cornice. The painting may also reflect Shah Tahmasp's desire to regain control of Baghdad, lost to the Ottomans several years earlier.

Various details of the *Divan* painting also suggest it had a personal significance beyond the obvious illustration of a text. Inscriptions are found on the cornice of the building, over its door and on the prince's throne (Figs. 8, 9). The ghazal illustrated is indeed addressed to a ruler, and the two lines from it inscribed on the building's cornice stress its royal message. The first, comparing the shah's face to the new moon, sets the mood for the painting as a whole; the second contains wishes for his prosperity and good fortune,[22] a theme repeated in inscriptions on the royal throne (Fig. 9). They are located in seven cartouches on a gold-brocaded cloth. At the centre is the painter's signature: "*'Amal-i* Sultan Muhammad" ("The work of Sultan Muhammad"), and around it are six half medallions inscribed with prayers on the ruler's behalf.[23]

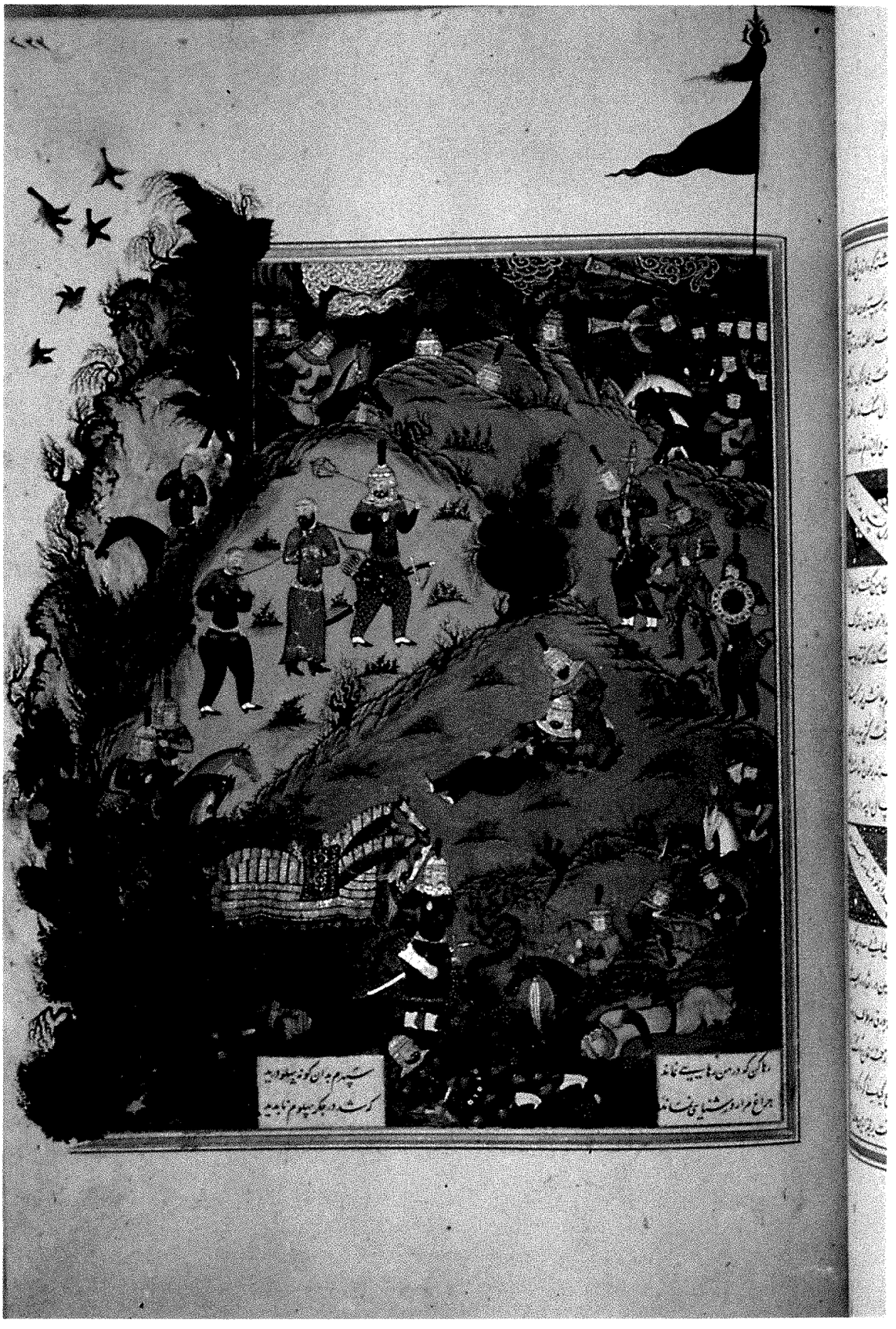
The message of these inscriptions is clear enough, but there is considerable confusion over the question of the person to whom these wishes are addressed. Another inscription over the door to the right reads: "al-Ghazi Abu'l-Muzaffar Sam Mirza," and this manuscript has long been ascribed to his patronage. Recently M. Dickson called attention to two problems with this inscription: that "Abu'l-Muzaffar" is the epithet used by Shah Tahmasp, whereas Sam Mirza is usually known as "Abu'l-Nasr;" and that its appearance suggests the inscription was rewritten to replace the shah's name with that of his brother.[24]

Paradoxically, although the *Divan* manuscript contains signed paintings by two prominent sixteenth-century painters, Shaykhzada and Sultan Muhammad Iraqi, the circumstances which led to its creation have remained enigmatic. Shaykhzada is closely associated with Herat and probably was taken to Bukhara by the Uzbek ruler, Ubayd Khan, in 1530, whereas Sultan Muhammad is known to have lived in Tabriz. The presence of their paintings in a single manuscript has led scholars to conclude that either Shaykhzada spent a short time in Tabriz, or Sultan Muhammad lived for some time in Herat.[25]

There is no inherent reason, however, why these two groups of paintings need to have been executed at the same time and in the same place. Evidence from the paintings themselves suggests they belong to two distinct phases. The two paintings by Shaykhzada, comprising the scene in a mosque and a now lost depiction of a princely figure at a polo match, have as their main protagonist a mature man with a moustache, whereas three others give the place of honour to a youthful prince.

The scene in a mosque by Shaykhzada and the paintings by Sultan Muhammad also differ significantly in their colouration. Shaykhzada's painting is notable for its muted and subtle tones. Sultan Muhammad, however, stresses a few basic colours—blue, red, yellow and green. In "The feast of 'Id," the frequent repetition of the same tones of these colours contributes significantly to the integrity of the composition (Figs. 8, 9).

feast of Sadeh," uhammad (Firdausi's a). The Metropolitan of Art, New York, rthur A. Houghton, , 1970. 301.2.



5. "Iskandar and the dying (Nizami's *Khamsa*). Topk. Saray Museum, Istanbul, Hazine 762, fol. 233a.

Shaykhzada's preference for subtle gradations in colour echoes that of Behzad and other painters at the Timurid court in Herat,[26] whereas Sultan Muhammad's preference for bold, mostly primary colours is reminiscent of paintings executed in Tabriz and Shiraz including the Safavid portions of "Sultan Sanjar and the old woman" from Hazine 762.[27]

Shaykhzada's ties with Herat are evident not only in his style but also because his paintings are in texts copied by calligraphers from that city including Mir Ali al-Haravi, Ali Hijrani and particularly Sultan Muhammad Nur.[28] Indeed, the *Divan* manuscript appears to be in the hand of Sultan Muhammad Nur. His writing has a distinctive delicacy created by the use of a narrow pen and by rarely using it to the full width.[29]

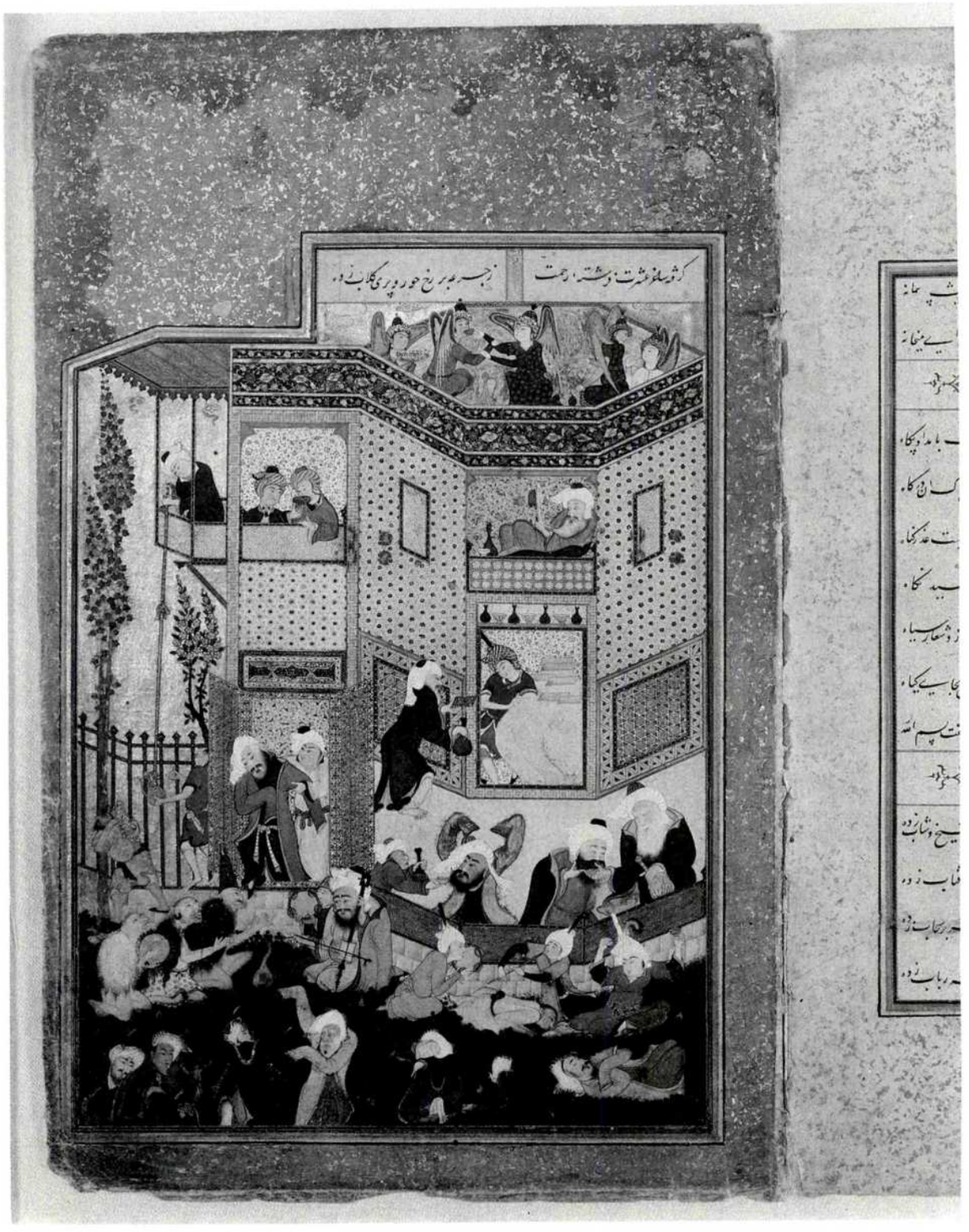
Shaykhzada's paintings also contain important clues about the original patron of the manuscript. He is probably represented in the mature man who sits apart from the congregation within the *eyvan* (archway) in the mosque scene and who is honoured by a retinue in the polo game.[30] The latter painting is particularly significant because the ghazal illustrated contains numerous allusions to military power and domination.[31] Pictorial evidence suggests that the manuscript's patron was a powerful military figure with attributes of a ruler. If Shaykhzada's paintings were executed in Herat, then the patron should have been a prominent figure in that city.

The Safavid rulers appointed royal princes as the governors of important provinces, but they were customarily under the protection of a powerful amir who was the *de facto* ruler of that territory. Thus, Sam Mirza was sent to Herat by Shah Isma'il and remained there during the first years of Shah Tahmasp's reign. His military protectors were all from the Shamlu tribe, and the most important of them was his cousin Husayn Khan Shamlu. They were together in Herat from 1525 until October of 1529 when they and their close associates evacuated the city during a siege by the Uzbek leader, Ubayd Khan.[32] After their departure Ubayd Khan occupied the city for nearly a year, and when he returned to Bukhara he took with him calligraphers, painters and bookbinders. Shaykhzada was possibly among them.[33]

Sam Mirza, Husayn Khan and his troops wandered through the countryside for more than a year, finally rejoining the Safavid court at Isfahan in the summer of 1531. This reunion was far from peaceful, for Husayn Khan attacked and killed Shah Tahmasp's chief amir in the ruler's own tent. Other amirs at court also rebelled and in July 1531 the shah was forced to replace the murdered man, Juha Sultan, with Husayn Khan, who thereby became the most powerful military figure at the Safavid court and in many respects the virtual ruler of Iran.[34]

The Safavid court, which included Husayn Khan, Sam Mirza and, of course, Shah Tahmasp, spent the winters of 1531-32 and 1532-33 in Tabriz. During this period Shah Tahmasp's territory was under attack by both the Ottomans and the Uzbeks and these conflicts also affected his relations with Husayn Khan Shamlu and Sam Mirza.[35]

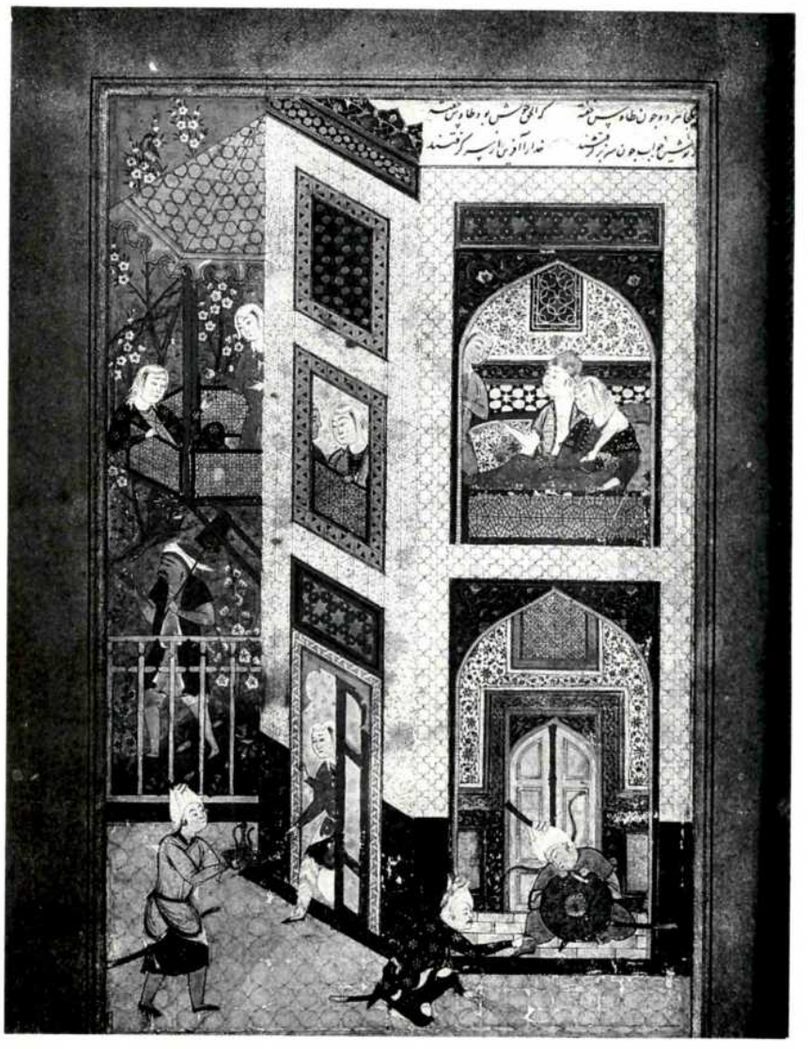
In the spring of 1533, Sam Mirza was once again appointed governor of Herat and given the protection of a Shamlu amir. His installation coincided with an Ottoman invasion and was soon followed, in the summer of 1533, by Husayn Khan's execution because of his involvement in a plot to replace Shah Tahmasp with Sam Mirza. This plot, which involved the collusion of the Ottomans and possibly the Uzbeks, included an attempt to poison the shah. Despite the death of his most powerful supporter, Sam Mirza did make some abortive attempts at rebellion for which he soon had to ask his brother's forgiveness, blaming his actions on bad advice from his amirs.[36]



When these events are combined with internal evidence from the *Divan* of Hafiz, it is possible to suggest several stages in the creation of this manuscript. It may have been copied and partially illustrated in Herat for Husayn Khan Shamlu between 1525 and October 1529. When the Shamlu amirs left that city during the Uzbek siege, Husayn Khan could easily have taken it with him on his peregrinations. After he became the *vakil* of Shah Tahmasp in 1531, three more paintings could have been added to the manuscript by Sultan Muhammad in Tabriz.

It is possible that Husayn Khan wished to celebrate his new power by presenting the manuscript to Shah Tahmasp. On the other hand, the addition of Sam Mirza's name to "The feast of 'Id" may have a connection with the plot to elevate him to the throne, a plot evidently conceived by Husayn Khan Shamlu and his allies.

6. "Worldly and otherwo drunkenness," Sultan Muhammad (Hafiz's *Diva* Promised gift of Mr and Mrs Stuart Cary Welch, J partially owned by The Metropolitan Museum of New York and Arthur M. S Museum, Harvard Univer Cambridge, Mass., 1988.



7. "Khusraw and Shirin after their wedding feast" (Nizami's *Khamsa*). John Rylands Library, Manchester, Pers. MS 3, fol. 55a.

Conclusion

Sultan Muhammad was clearly a painter of unusual talent and subtlety. His paintings for the *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp draw upon the heritage of Tabriz but gradually the artist must have accommodated himself to new compositional trends at the Safavid court. His later works from the *Divan* of Hafiz use schemes which are paralleled in other Safavid court paintings, but Sultan Muhammad's illustrations are unequalled in their subtle linking of verbal and visual imagery.

NOTES

1. M. Dickson and S. C. Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh*, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London, 1981).
2. S. C. Welch, *Persian Painting: Five Royal Safavid Manuscripts of the Sixteenth Century* (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1976), pp. 20-21, pls. 15-18.
3. A painting on folio 516v in the *Shahnama* is dated to 934/1527-28 (Dickson & Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh*, II, no. 216) and since the paintings most closely associated with Sultan Muhammad's are at the beginning of the text they may have been executed a few years earlier; for the date of the *Divan* of Hafiz see below section titled "Sultan Muhammad and the *Divan* of Hafiz."
4. Dickson & Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh*, I: 51-54, 242-43.
5. Dickson & Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh*, I, colour plates nos. 7, 8; II, no. 7.

feast of 'Id," Sultan
nad (Hafiz's *Divan*).
Collection.

feast of 'Id" (detail
ıthroned prince), Sultan
nad (Hafiz's *Divan*).
Collection.

6. Dickson & Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh,* II, nos. 8, 9, 10; due to constraints of space other examples attributed to Sultan Muhammad will not be discussed here; on these see ibid., I: 56-86.
7. H. Massé, *Croyances et Coutumes Persanes* (Paris, 1938), vol. 2, pp. 352-68.
8. R. Hillenbrand, *Imperial Images in Persian Painting* (Edinburgh, 1977), no. 198, p. 198; B. Gray, *Persian Painting* (Geneva, 1977), pp. 106-108.
9. N. Shatzman Steinhardt, "Chinese Ladies in the Istanbul Albums," *Islamic Art* I (1981): 77-84, figs. 110-13.
10. Dickson & Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh,* I: 30-32.
11. I. Stchoukine, "Les Peintures Turcomanes et Safavies d'une Khamseh de Nizami achevée à Tabriz en 886/1481," *Arts Asiatiques,* vol. 14 (1966), fig. IV.
12. Ibid., fig. III.
13. Arabic verses on the flap of the binding state it was made on the order of Najm al-Din's treasury; he may also be the writer of the postscript (ff. 316b-317b), for it includes an allusion to his loyalty to Shah Isma'il:

The star [najm] of the firmament is bound by your decree.

and concludes with a pun on his name, Najm Mas'ud. For a translation of earlier sections of this postscript see W. M. Thackston, *A Century of Princes: Sources on Timurid History and Art* (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), pp. 333-34.
14. J. Aubin, "Etudes Safavies. I. Šah Isma'il et les notables de l'Iraq Persan," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient,* 2 (1959): 65-66.
15. B. W. Robinson, "Persian and Pre-Mughal Indian Painting," in *Islamic Painting and the Arts of the Book* (London, 1976), no. III, 207, pp. 178, pl. 19.
16. S. C. Welch, *Persian Painting,* pp. 20-21, pls. 16-18.
17. Dickson & Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh,* II, nos. 3, 15.
18. B. W. Robinson, *Persian Paintings in the John Rylands Library* (London, 1980), pp. 148-52.
19. Qazvini, Muhammad & Qasim Ghani, eds., *Divan-i Khwaja Shams al-Din Muhammad Hafiz-i Shirazi* (Tehran, 1320/1941), no. 421, pp. 291-92.
20. Translation by M. B. Dickson cited in S. C. Welch, *Wonders of the Age: Masterpieces of Early Safavid Painting, 1501-1576* (Cambridge, Mass.: Fogg Art Museum, 1979), p. 127.
21. Ibid., no. 57, p. 154.
22. Qazvini & Ghani, *Divan-i Hafiz,* no. 246, lines 1, 5, pp. 166-67; the text of this ghazal as given on the back of the painting contains a repetition of the second verse inscribed on the building but not of the first. This suggests that originally the page had a cartouche containing this first distich but that it was covered over when the painting was executed.
23. Reading counter-clockwise from the right side, they wish him Victory (*fath*), [Divine] Assistance (*nusrat*), Good Fortune (*daulat*), Triumph (*piruzi*) and [Long] Life (*'umr*). The cartouche at the lower right is illegible.
24. S. C. Welch, *Wonders of the Age,* p. 127.
25. S. C. Welch, *Persian Painting,* pp. 17-21; Dickson & Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh,* I: 39-40, 53-55.
26. S. C. Welch, *Persian Painting,* pl. 16; Gray, *Persian Painting,* pp. 116-17, 119, 122-23, 128, 131.
27. Ibid., pp. 105-107, 132; Stchoukine, "Peintures Turcomanes," fig. III.
28. Manuscripts containing paintings in the style of Shaykhzada include:
(i) Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul, Hazine 871, copied by Sultan Muhammad Nur and dated to 922/1516-17.
(ii) Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, Istanbul, no. 1919, copied by 'Ali al-Husayni al-Katib and dated to 925/1519.
(iii) Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 32.54, copied by Sultan Muhammad Nur and dated to 1523.
(iv) Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 13.228.7, copied by Sultan Muhammad Nur and dated to 1525.
(v) Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, supp. Turc 316, 317, copied by Ali Hijrani and dated to 1526-27.
29. For a list of manuscripts copied by Sultan Muhammad Nur see M. Bayani, *Khush-nevisan—nasta'liq nevisan* (Tehran, 1345), pp. 272-80.
30. For reproductions see S. C. Welch, *Persian Painting,* p. 21, pl. 16.
31. Qazvini & Ghani, *Divan-i Hafiz,* no. 108, p. 74.
32. M. B. Dickson, "Shah Tahmasb and the Uzbeks," (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1958), pp. 18, 51, 72, 154.
33. Ibid., p. 165; Qadi Ahmad, *Calligraphers and Painters: A Treatise by Qadi Ahmad, Son of Mir Munshi,* trans. V. Minorsky (Washington, DC, 1959), pp. 130-32; Dickson & Welch, *The Houghton Shahnameh* I: 39-40.
34. Dickson, "Shah Tahmasb and the Uzbeks," pp. 154, 193-201.
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ge and Time
the Work of Riza

ila R. Canby

Most twentieth-century studies of Riza, the late sixteenth-early seventeenth-century Persian painter also known as Aqa Riza and Riza-yi 'Abbasi, have focused on the artist's style and the chronology of his works. Innumerable problems of authentication have diverted attention from the content of Riza's *oeuvre*. Fortunately, the tide of scholarship turned in 1964 with Ivan Stchoukine's major study[1] which treated style and content as equally important elements of Riza's work. Subsequently, Lisa Golombek, Richard Ettinghausen and Anthony Welch have investigated the interrelationship of Riza's style and content and how he expressed the spirit of the age in which he lived.[2]

Despite the variations in Riza's style, certain themes recur in his fifty-odd-year career (*c.* 1585-1635). In addition to the idea of yearning for the absent lover and metaphors for mystical union with God, the subjects of age and the passage of time unite Riza's earliest periods with his latest. An integral aspect of his portraiture is the depiction of the sitter's age. To communicate this fact about his subjects, Riza developed a visual typology for young, middle-aged and old people. In works depicting two or more figures, he often contrasted young men with older ones. Such juxtapositions both sharpen the characterizations of Riza's sitters and suggest a preoccupation with the passage of time. In addition to works that express in a general way the progression from youth to middle or old age, Riza executed a few works that allude to the passing of an era in Iran. Thus, social and technological changes of the period figure in Riza's work as they rarely, if ever, had done in earlier Safavid art.

Various scholars have estimated that Riza's artistic career began in the mid-1580s and that he joined the royal atelier upon the accession of Shah 'Abbas I in 1587.[3] On the basis of their stylistic affinities with works of other artists active in the 1570s and 1580s, several inscribed, undated works, including the "Young man in a blue coat" (Fig. 1), are assigned to Riza working in the late 1580s. Standing in a landscape lightly painted in gold, the slender figure wears a vermilion robe, a thickly knotted white sash, and a royal blue cloak draped over his shoulders. Wrapped around a gold *kulah*, or cap, the figure's turban, with feathers, flower, and tufts of hair emerging from its folds, evokes a studied nonchalance. More than his clothes or even his stance, his face reveals his youth. The perfect arcs of his eyebrows, the curve of his hairless cheek and double chin, the finely

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Work of the most
Riza." *c.* 1587, Safavid
Opaque water-colour
c. 34 x 21.9 cm.
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period. Opaque water-
ı paper. 9.5 x 17.2 cm.
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3. "Rustam kills the white elephant," attributed to Riza (*Shahnameh* of Firdausi). *c.* 1595, Safavid period. Opaque water-colour on paper. 40.7 x 26.1 cm. (sheet). Chester Beatty Library and Gallery of Oriental Art, Dublin, Ms. 277, fol. 13a.

4. "Day-dreaming youth," signed "Aqa Riza." *c.* 1600, Safavid period. Ink on paper. 12 x 6.7 cm. Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Alpheus Hyatt Fund, 1952. 7.

drawn eyes and nose, and his faint smile amount to a paradigm of youthful Persian beauty, suggesting that combination of innocence and self-confidence characteristic of attractive, privileged young men and women on the verge of adulthood.

About 1595, with his painting of the "Reclining nude" (Fig. 2), Riza departed radically from his predecessors' depictions of modest young ladies.[4] The figure lies on her side by the bank of a stream, with a transparent cloth over her midriff and thigh. The nude's ample thighs and belly, compact breasts, round face, delicate features, and long, wispy

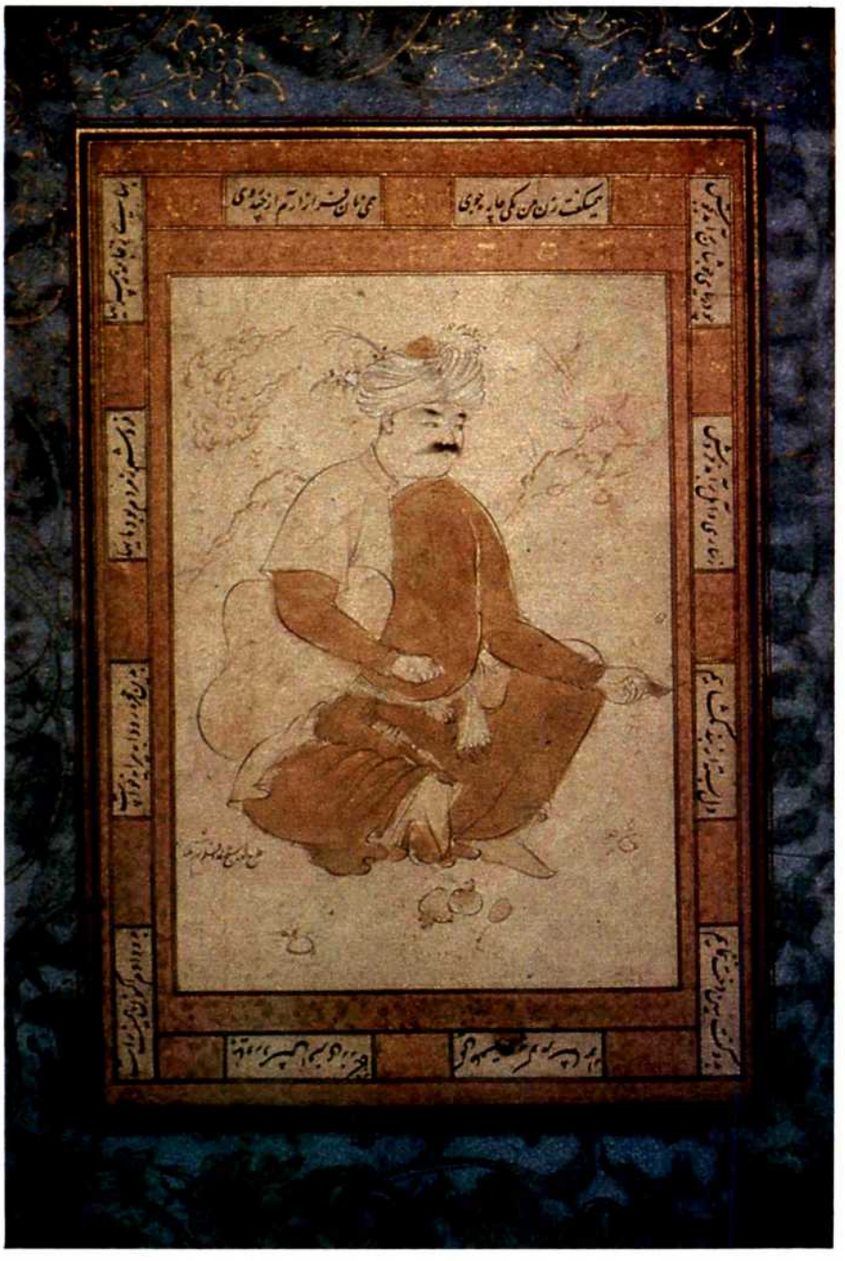
hair must have corresponded to the late-sixteenth-century Persian ideal of sensuality. Yet, as the figure dozes, smiling, with her hand upon a poem or letter, she appears innocent and unaware of her allure. Whether Riza based this painting on a Western prototype or on a living model, he maintains a balance between the ingenuousness and the sensual appeal of the young woman. Like the "Young man in a blue coat" (Fig. 1), the "Reclining nude" (Fig. 2) seems chaste and optimistic, much as Riza himself must have been in the late 1580s and early 1590s. Whether the smiles on these figures' faces relate to memories or anticipation, they confirm the existence of a mental life beyond the spatial and temporal confines of the picture.

The young men and women in Riza's early 1587-95 single-figure portraits rarely do anything more strenuous than offer a flower or fruit to an unseen recipient. By contrast, the young men in Riza's illustrations to a *Shahnameh* of about 1587-97[5] perform strenuous or serious tasks. In "Rustam kills the white elephant" (Fig. 3) of about 1595, the protagonist conforms to Riza's canon for young men with his plump, hairless face and slim physique. Unlike the "Young man in a blue coat" (Fig. 1), Rustam's full lips and short neck increase the impression of a round, somewhat pudgy face. Rather than simply indicating a change in model, these differences herald the development of a new youthful facial type in Riza's work of the 1590s and early 1600s to which the "Day-dreaming youth" (Fig. 4) of about 1600 conforms. As with Riza's earlier portraits, the youth's pose is static and his expression suggests contemplation. Because his features are thicker than those of the "Young man in a blue coat" (Fig. 1), he appears less innocent than his earlier counterpart, but his youth is unmistakable.

During the 1590s, Riza also executed portraits of middle-aged men. The most important of these for the chronology of Riza's *oeuvre* is a drawing of the "Man holding a cup" (Fig. 5), inscribed "Design of Master Shaykh Muhammad, drawing of Aqa Riza 1000" (1591-92). Beyond its obvious documentary significance, this work provides an interesting comparison with Riza's portraits of young men. The man's bristly black moustache, thick black eyebrows, squarish face and wrinkled brow identify him as middle-aged. Unlike the young men, his eyes focus sharply to his left, outside of the picture space, presumably on the person to whom he proffers his cup. In contrast to Riza's dreamy young men and women, the "Man holding a cup" impresses one with a sense of immediacy, of being present, mind and body.

As with the "Man holding a cup" (Fig. 5), the "Man with a ram" (Fig. 6) possesses the physical traits of Riza's middle-aged male figures—a moustache, furrowed brow, thick eyebrows, and square face. Leaning forward, the man is absorbed in coaxing the ram to come toward him. The hilt of a knife, visible at the man's back, most likely alludes to the eventual fate of the ram, who will be served up at a feast.[6] Whereas Rustam (Fig. 3) exhibits little emotion beyond determination, the expression of this man is tinged with sympathy for the ram, who looks vacantly, perhaps trustingly, at his master. Both the "Man holding a cup" (Fig. 5) and the "Man with a ram" focus on the present but hint at the future by implying, respectively, the filling or receiving of the cup and the slaughter of the ram.

Two other drawings point out Riza's different treatment of figures according to age. The "Hunter on horseback" (Fig. 7) of the mid-1590s depicts a young rider patting the rump of his horse as they proceed through a rocky landscape. A dead mountain goat is fastened to his saddle, with its head suspended below the belly of the horse. Like his less athletic counterparts (Figs. 1 and 4), the hunter appears thoughtful as he gazes back beyond the horse's tail. Whether he is recalling the excitement of the hunt or imagining



5. "Man holding a cup," signed "Design of Master Sh
Muhammad, drawing of Aqa Riza 1000." 1591-92, Sa
period. Ink and colours on paper. 16 x 11.2 cm. (drav
Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2166, fol

6. "Man with a ram," signed "Riza drew it." *c.* 1598,
Safavid period. 9.1 x 14.1 cm. (drawing). Ex-Demirdj
Collection, Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard Univ
Cambridge, Massachusetts, Francis H. Burr Memorial
1948. 59.

7. "Hunter on horseback," inscribed "Riza-yi 'Abbasi
drew it." *c.* 1595, Safavid period. Ink and colours on
paper. By courtesy of the Board of Trustees of the Vi
and Albert Museum, London.

فرح بخش درونهای پریشان | کلید قفل مشکلهای دوران | جهانی در سر سودای او گرم | ولی در دست مردم موم سان نرم

اوز عشقی حالی دین خبر بیر ماکته کیم کونکول هر نیچه یار درد و غمی دین
آزار تا پار اما اینینک ماه رخسارین کور کاج مهری فزون راق و
محبتی سر رشته سی اوزون راق بولور بو مطلع نظیری یوقتور ورکیم

هر نیچه تار تار کونکول درد و غم و آزاری | [illegible]

مطلوب اوز ظلمی نینک عذرین طعن و طنز بیله ایتور دا کیم فی الحقیقه
اول داغی یانا بیر ظلم دور عاشق جانی غه بو مطلع دا هم غریب
ادا هم عاشقانه بیان تا بیب دورکیم

عذر او چون شیرین [illegible] | بو فسون بیر له او توم نی [illegible]

سرو آزادی نینک باغ دا جلوه ایلاماکی و اول سبب دین

پی پیر معلم آن جوانمرد | نهان از این و آن در صره کرد | فلک چون از پی نیرنگ و دستان | درست مغربی را کرد پنهان

dining on his prey, he appears momentarily removed from the time and place in which he and his horse are portrayed.

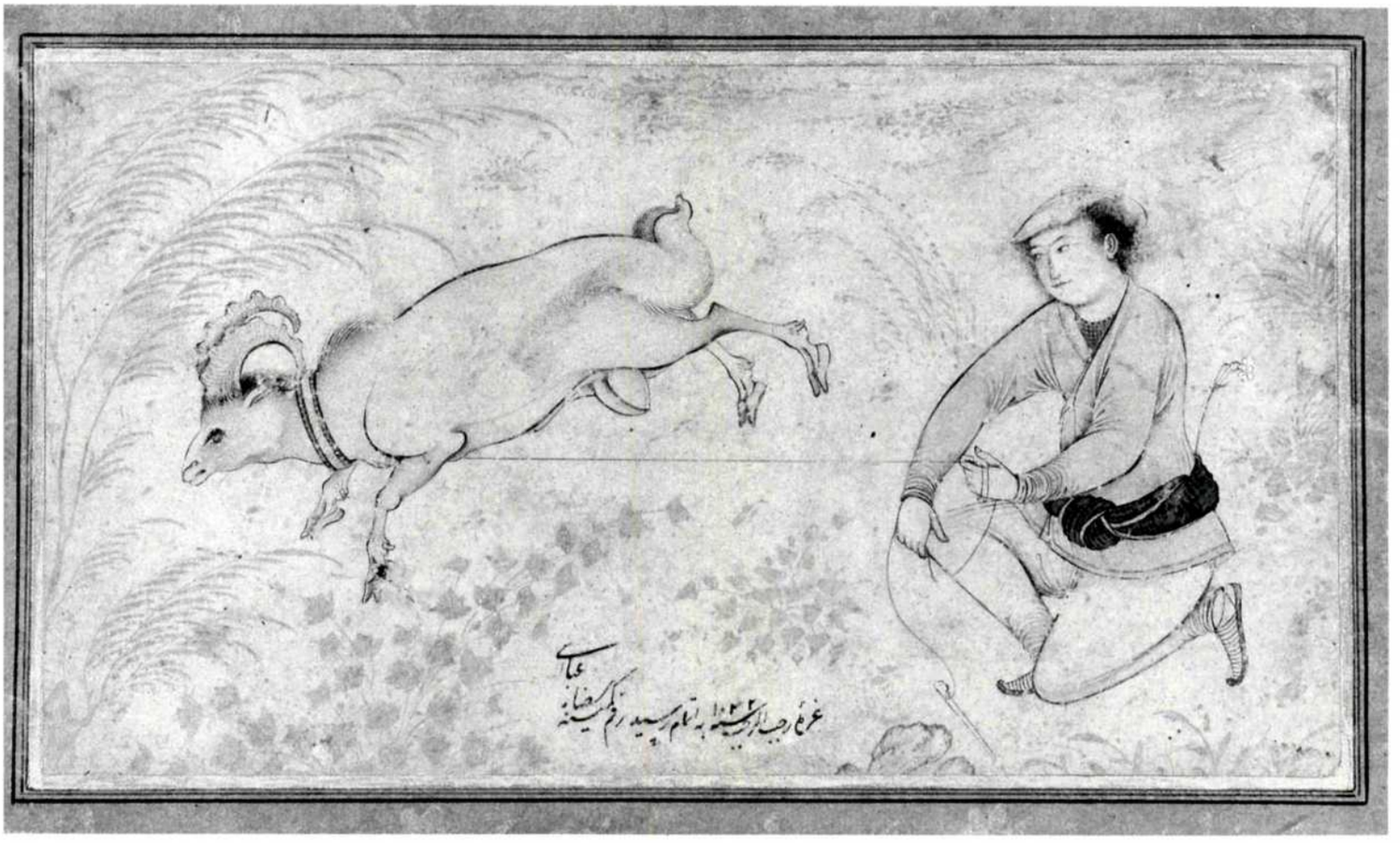
The "Youth restraining a bucking ram" (Fig. 8), dated 1623, compares instructively with the earlier "Man with a ram" (Fig. 6). Unlike the man, the youth is physically and psychologically distant from the ram, showing neither the physical strain nor the emotional involvement of the "Man with a ram." By portraying the youth as mentally removed from the activity at hand, like the hunter (Fig. 7), Riza has implied here two tracks of time, the visible present and the undefined time in the youth's mind.

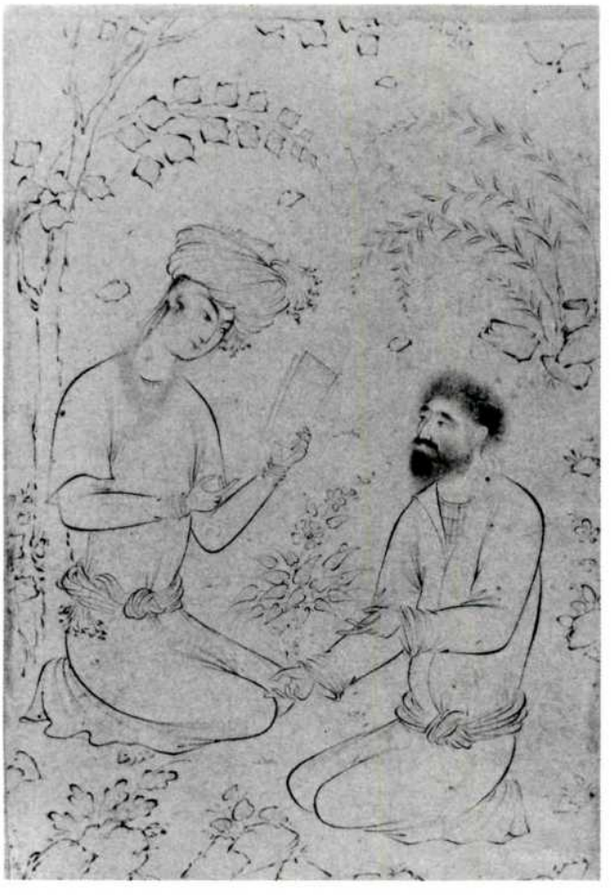
Riza has juxtaposed two distinct types of men in the "Youth and a poet" (Fig. 9), a superb drawing of about 1595. To the left an elegant, smoothfaced young man kneels holding a book toward which he gestures with his right hand. At a diagonal to the right kneels an older, bearded man who looks toward the youth and motions with both hands. In addition to the contrast in ages, the difference between the young man's turban and fur-lined robe and the older man's bare head and simple robe may indicate a class distinction. Possibly the figures can be identified as a poet and his young patron or as the older spiritual adviser and his young, courtly disciple. Even as the younger and older man appear to discuss the contents of the book, they do not make eye contact. The older man's gaze may be riveted on the youth, but the youth focuses only on his book.

Perhaps social conventions dictated that younger men should avert their gaze from their mentors. Yet, Riza may just as likely have imbued figures of different ages with different levels of consciousness. In the first fifteen years of his career, the facial expressions of his young men and women consistently suggest a mental space and time outside that of the picture, whereas his older figures are portrayed as alert and connected to the moment in which they are depicted. Even later, as an illustration on the colophon page of a *Makhzan al-Asrar* of Haydar Khwarazmi (Fig. 12), dated 1614, reveals, the young dandy does not focus on the older, bearded man who offers him a flowering stalk and a leafy twig. Appearing at the end of a poetical treatise, this scene may be a metaphor for the poet's presentation of his work to his patron. In keeping with Riza's other portraits of youths and older men, the young man embodies the charms and limitations of youthful beauty while the older man's intelligence compensates for his lack of physical appeal.

Following the move of the Safavid court from Qazvin to Isfahan in 1598, Riza executed an opulent group of portrait paintings, mostly of young men. In the "Man in a fur-lined coat" (Fig. 10), one of Riza's typical young men luxuriates beside a pillow with fruit placed nearby. This man's head is inclined and his eyes have the now familiar faraway look. The fur lining of his cloak grazes his cheek. As if the sensation of touching the fur were an *aide-mémoire*, the young man exists in a state of pleasant contemplation, physically in one place, mentally in another.

In marked contrast to his previous portraits, Riza's brilliant "Youth and an old man" (Fig. 11), of about 1602-03, depicts a young man fully occupied with his older companion. At the left a seated young man nuzzles the fur lining of his cloak and beckons to the old man at the right. Except for the polychrome rendering of the young man's face and accessories and the old man's blue sash, the outlines of the young man's body and clothes, the old man, and the landscape elements are all painted in gold and a few strokes of black ink. Unlike his predecessors, who were either portrayed alone or averting their gaze, this young man looks directly at the older man. Both his gesture and his pose express his seductive intentions. Meanwhile, the bearded, bare-headed old man kneels, shoulders hunched, with his left hand extended slightly toward the youth. His closed, ovoid form contrasts markedly with the open, expansive pose of the youth. Apparently,



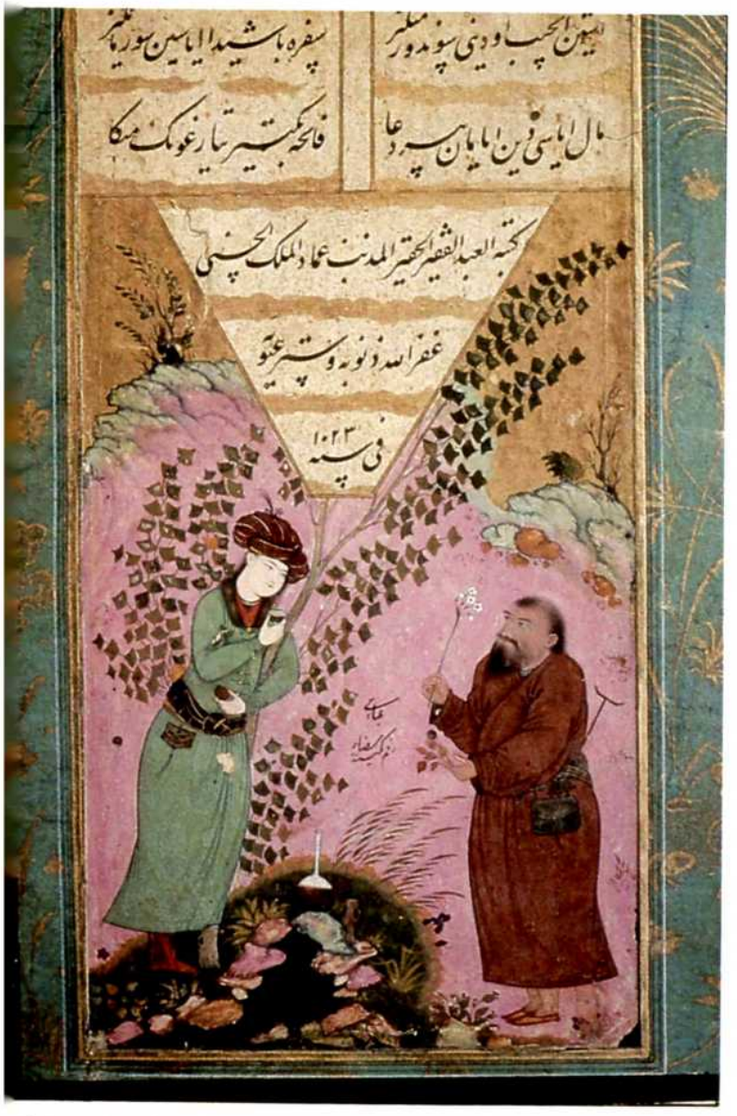


. "Youth restraining a bucking am," signed "Riza-yi 'Abbasi." Dated 1623, Safavid period. nk and colours on paper. .5 x 17 cm. (drawing). The Brooklyn Museum, New York, Museum Purchase, 5. 80.

. "Youth and a poet," signed Riza drew it." *c.* 1595, Safavid eriod. Ink and colours on aper. Keir Collection, Surrey, ngland.

0. "Man in a fur-lined coat," igned "Riza drew it." *c.* 1600, afavid period. Opaque water-olour on paper. 14 x 6.3 cm. ainting). The Metropolitan luseum of Art, New York, urchase—Rogers Fund, 55. 21. 39.

11. "Youth and an old man," signed "Aqa Riza drew it." *c.* 1602-03, Safavid period. Opaque water-colour, gold, and ink on coloured paper. 32.6 x 21.4 cm. (sheet). Ex-Vever Collection, Courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, S86. 0292.



12. "Youth and a dervish," signed "Work of the humble Riza-yi 'Abbasi" (*Makhzan al-Asrar* of Haydar Khwarazmi). Dated 1614, Safavid period. Opaque water-colour on paper. 18 x 9.5 cm. (sheet). Ex-Rothschild Collection, Paris, Aboulala Soudavar Collection, Houston, Texas.

13. "Shaykh in the waste-land," inscribed "The work of Riza." *c.* 1605 Safavid period. Ink and colours on paper. 13.8 x 5.6 cm. (drawing). Topkapi Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 2145, fol. 11A.

14. "Bearded cavalier and two hunters," inscribed "Work of the humble Riza-yi 'Abbasi." *c.* 1625, Safavid period. Ink and colours on paper. 20.7 x 13.3 cm. (drawing). The Brooklyn Museum, New York, Museum Purchase, 35. 1027.

15. "Nashmi the archer," signed "Work of the humble Riza-'Abbasi." Dated 1630, Safavid period. Opaque water-colour paper. 19 x 10 cm. (painting). Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Estate of Al Aldrich Rockefeller, 1960. 197.

Riza has reversed the usual order of such scenes in which the older man approaches or entices the younger man (see Fig. 12). Yet the elusive nature of the older figure, the landscape, and the young man's robe, almost entirely rendered in gold, calls into question the reality of the scene. Has Riza gone one step further than his customary portraits of young men lost in thought by including the object of the young man's affections, albeit as an illusion, not as a "real" figure? If so, Riza could have adhered to the established convention of discretion while actually exposing the emotional content of such a pairing. Stylistically the painting rates among the best in all of Riza's *oeuvre*. Far from being merely clever, the technique of combining polychrome and gold paint on a peach ground may provide the clue to the meaning of the work. Even as we observe the encounter of a young

and an old man, we must question whether both figures were intended to exist in the same time and space or whether the young man is not seeing the old man only with his mind's eye.

Following the establishment of Shah 'Abbas' capital at Isfahan and Riza's remarkable portraits of young Isfahanis (cf. Figs. 10 and 11), he is reported to have spurned court life in favour of the company of wrestlers and ne'er-do-wells.[7] For a few years between about 1603 and 1610, Riza ceased to paint portraits of the young and wealthy and instead produced a series of drawings of exotic types and older men in bleak landscapes. One of these portraits, the "Shaykh in the waste-land" (Fig. 13), exemplifies Riza's preoccupation at this time with using his older figures as vehicles to express strong emotions. The bearded shaykh stands alone, his left hand outstretched in a wild, somewhat threatening landscape. The unevenly applied washes of his coat and robe, his carelessly wound turban, his beseeching gesture, and his popping, anxious eyes emphasize the spiritual unrest of this figure. Traditionally in Persian painting, illustrations and the occasional portraits of men attacked by animals or other men provided the only arena for the expression of extreme or unsettling emotions. Here, however, the intense anxiety of the figure, echoed in the agitated landscape, cannot be denied. Perhaps such a figure reflects Riza's own troubled state of mind in this period, but also it demonstrates his willingness to break with convention and reveal the vexed state of an individual unconnected to a narrative or another personage.

When Riza returned to painting courtly figures, he retreated from the intense emotionalism of the "Shaykh in the waste-land" (Fig. 13). In addition to numerous single-figure portraits of stylish youths or pensive old men, Riza continued to execute works juxtaposing youth and old age. One single-page tinted drawing, the "Bearded cavalier and two hunters" (Fig. 14), incorporates several levels of meaning pertaining to age and time. In the centre of the page a horse stands knee-deep in a stream, drinking from a fountain falling from the rocks above. Armed with a bow and arrows, his elderly bearded rider gazes thoughtfully toward the horse's head. At the left a young man with a musket slung over his shoulder squats on a promontory, filling a cup with water. Above at the right another young man tilts his head to observe the scene below at the fountain. He, too, carries a musket on his shoulder, with a dead bird dangling from its muzzle. The young men's faintly smiling, rounded faces and arching brows correspond to Riza's norms for such figures. In keeping with his other portraits of bearded old men from the 1620s, the rider appears lost in thought but avoids eye contact with the other figures. Not only do the ages of the figures differ noticeably, so do their prominently displayed weapons. The old archer has not bagged any prey, whereas one of the young men has shot a bird.

By the early 1620s, the Iranian army had finally overcome its resistance to the use of firearms.[8] Depicting the young gun-toting hunters as successful in contrast to the old archer, Riza has demonstrated that the effectiveness of guns was not limited to the battlefield and has alluded to the changes in Iranian society under Shah 'Abbas I of which the movement from bows and arrows to guns was only symptomatic. The old order in which Turkman tribes dominated the army and Tajiks, or native Iranians, controlled the administration of the government was permanently altered under Shah 'Abbas. He used Georgian slaves as his personal army and reorganized the national army according to function instead of solely along tribal lines. Thus, young musketeers such as those in Riza's drawing gained ascendancy over the old archers of the ancient regime. While the callow young hunters appear unaware of the deeper significance of this encounter at the fountain, the poignant, ruminative expression of the bearded rider must reflect a

nostalgia for Iran's bygone era and an awareness of the deeper significance of this encounter at the fountain.

During the final years of his career, Riza added some eccentrics to his gallery of youths and old men. Even the memorable eccentric portrait of "Nashmi the archer" (Fig. 15) alludes to the "good old days" of the archer-soldier. Yet, instead of evoking nostalgia, Nashmi presents an ironic, amusing picture. His sly, bemused expression suggests that a few puffs on his pipe have alleviated the indignities of age and the yearning for the glorious days of youth.

Having established an artistic vocabulary for young, old, and middle-aged figures, Riza invested each group with a different meaning. His young figures consistently possess smooth, hairless faces, gracefully arched brows, and pleasant but opaque facial expressions. Even if they hunt or read poetry, they appear too romantic for sharp thinking. By contrast, Riza's middle-aged men appear alert; one can imagine them working. His old men convey emotion and a sense of the passage of time. When portrayed with youths, they may embody wisdom or an outmoded way of life, but they always imply the fate of the young men, namely old age. Even Riza's eccentric portraits, such as "Nashmi the archer," allude to the passage of time by focusing on the sitter's old-fashioned profession. Whether Riza intended to suggest that old and middle-aged people had more fully developed characters than the young, he consistently endowed his old men with nuances of feeling absent in his youths, as if the young had not lived long enough to experience complicated emotions. While Riza may have been expressing his own yearning for the days of his youth in works such as the "Bearded cavalier and two hunters" (Fig. 14), his portraits of old men indicate a respect for age, and by extension an understanding that time shapes men and allows them to live in the past and the present simultaneously.

NOTES

1. Ivan Stchoukine, *Les Peintures des Manuscrits de Shah 'Abbas Ier à la Fin des Safavis* (Paris, 1964), pp. 85-133.
2. Lisa Golombek, "Toward a Classification of Islamic Painting," *Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York, 1972), p. 29 ff.; Richard Ettinghausen, "Stylistic Tendencies at the Time of Shah 'Abbas," Studies on Isfahan, part II, *Iranian Studies* VII, nos. 3-4 (1974): 600 ff.; Anthony Welch, "Painting and Patronage under Shah 'Abbas I," Studies on Isfahan, part II, *Iranian Studies* VII, nos. 3-4 (1974): 475-82; Anthony Welch, *Artists for the Shah* (New Haven, 1976), pp. 100-49 and *passim.*
3. Stchoukine, *Les Peintures,* p. 87; A. Welch, "Painting and Patronage under Shah 'Abbas I," p. 479; Sheila R. Canby, "The Life and Work of the Painter Riza" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 1981), p. 39.
4. Before the period of Shah 'Abbas I, single-figure portraits of women were less common than those of men. The standard sitter for such portraits was a young woman, fully and elegantly clothed. Riza himself portrayed at least one such woman in his early career, as did many of his contemporaries in the late sixteenth century. See Esin Atil, *The Brush of the Masters: Drawings from Iran and India* (Washington, 1978), pp. 54-55, fig. 19A.
5. The manuscript is in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ms. 277. It is incomplete but is believed to have been commissioned by Shah 'Abbas I upon his accession in 1587. A. Welch, *Artists for the Shah,* pp. 106-25.
6. Eric Schroeder, "Two Persian Drawings," *The Bulletin of the Fogg Art Museum* XI (March 1950): 72.
7. Qadi Ahmad, *Calligraphers and Painters: A Treatise by Qadi Ahmad, Son of Mir Munshi,* trans. V. Minorsky, Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers, vol. 3, no. 2 (Washington, 1959), pp. 192-93.
8. Although firearms had been available since the reign of Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-76), they were not fully accepted until the reign of Shah 'Abbas I (1587-1629).

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T. Lentz and G. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision: Persian Art and Culture in the Fifteenth Century* (Los Angeles and Washington, DC, 1989).
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Note

The Painted Manuscript Covers From Nawapur (Gilgit)

B. N. Mukherjee

There are three pairs of painted wooden covers in the Central Asian Museum of the Centre for Central Asian Studies at the Kashmir University, Srinagar. These were found in 1938 along with three manuscripts inside stupa C at Nawapur near Gilgit in northern Kashmir (now a part of Pakistan).[1] We were kindly allowed by Mr J. Bhan of this museum to study these painted manuscript covers in September, 1986.

The three pairs of painted covers are numbered 80-115, 80-116 and 80-117 in their present repository. The objects listed as 80-115 are made of willow wood, while those numbered 80-117 are of poplar wood. Seshm wood seems to have been used for preparing the covers numbered 80-116.

One of the last noted pair of covers (80-116) measures 21 centimetres in length. The measurement of one of the two shorter sides is 5.5 centimetres and the other is 5 centimetres. This cover may be indicated as cover A. The other cover (B) measures 21 x 5.5 centimetres. The edges of the corners of both the covers are rounded, though at present one corner of each cover is broken. Each of the covers has a hole obviously for passing of a string through it and for tying it with the pierced pages of the relevant manuscript. Cover B is slightly cracked on one side. Both the covers bear on one side painted scrolls of lotus.

On the other side of cover A is painted the figure of the Buddha in a monk's red robe seated in front of a lotus in *vajra-paryanka asana*—the two hands are in the *dharmachakra-parvartana mudra*. The Master has a halo. His face is slightly turned to the left. He sits under a decorated parasol, from which hangs a garland. Two male devotees are kneeling in front of the Lord. Each of them wears a turban and a long robe. Their faces are shown in profile. The figure on the left has his folded hands near his chest in the *anjali-mudra* or the gesture of devotion. But the figure on the right, whose face looks slightly upwards, holds a sword in the half-raised right hand and a shield resting on the lap by the left hand. This figure apparently represents a military general. Both the figures seem to be personages of eminence (Fig. 1).

On cover B a male with a white complexion sits cross-legged in the front—probably on a lotus with his thighs slightly raised. His face is turned a little to the right. His left hand, resting on his thigh, holds the stalk of a lotus, while the right hand is in the *vitarka-mudra*—the gesture of argument. He wears a red lower garment, different types of ornaments and a crown. He has a halo. His figure can be easily recognized as that of Bodhisattva Padmapani or Avalokitesvara. Two male figures are kneeling in front of the deity. Their general appearance seems similar to those of the devotees on cover A. Apparently the two devotees are represented on both the covers. In fact, the similarity between a member of one pair with the corresponding one of the other is so remarkable that we may have real portraits and not just conventional representations of two male personages. However, on cover B both the figures have their hands folded in *anjali-mudra*. The folded hands of the figure on the left holds the stalk of a lotus, offering it apparently to the god holding the lotus who is favouring him by placing his left foot on the worshipper's turban (Fig. 2).

The lines of the figures are fairly well drawn, though the attenuated waist of Padmapani is somewhat disproportionate with the upper parts of his torso. Volume to the figures is effected by manipulation of gliding, line and shading of colour (the shading is noticeable on the face of the seated deity in figure 1 and the standing personage in figure 3). These are reminiscent of the Gupta idiom,[2] though not attaining the latters' perfection. The folds of the Buddha's garment are indicated by lines, which, however, cannot produce any chiaroscuro effect. The faces of the deities are roundish, but not bloated as noticeable in Buddhist bronze images from Kashmir of the post-8th century AD.[3] The treatment of the figures of the worshippers is more flat in comparison with the representations of the deities. These stylistic features may date the paintings to a post-Gupta and pre-AD 800 period.

The colours used in the illustrations are black, white, light green, red (ochre) and pale yellow. Their soft tones are noticeable.

The first cover (A) of the pair of covers listed as 80-117 is quadrilateral, the longer sides being 24 and 24.1 centimetres and the shorter sides measuring 7 and 8 centimetres. The length of the other cover (B) is 23 centimetres on one side and 24 centimetres on the other. Its w is 7 centimetres on one side and 7.5 centimetres on the other. The edg of each of the covers is damaged at several places. One of the corners of cover B is slightly broken. Both cover A and B have holes as well as traces scrolls of lotus similar to the first pair number 80-116.

The front side of cover A displays its upper portion the seated figure of *dhyani* Buddha Amitabha, whose har are on his lap in *samadhi-mudra* or th gesture of meditation. He sits on a lo and has a halo. He wears a loose red garment. On the lower side of the pa is a male figure in the *tribhanga* pos standing with ankles crossed on a lot The figure wears a short lower garm and different types of ornaments. A s draped around his shoulders hangs d the sides of both the arms. His left h holds the stalk of a lotus and the righ hand is in the *varada-mudra*, bestowi a boon to a devotee kneeling before with folded hands in *anjali-mudra*. The figure of Buddha Amitabha appe on the crest of the main figure. Hence he has been recognized as Bodhisattv Padmapani or Avalokitesvara, the emanation of Amitabha[4] (Fig. 3).

The modelling of the body of Avalokitesvara by manipulation of gli line and shading of colour betrays th influence of the Gupta idiom. On the other hand, an almost effeminate treatment of the upper part of the to is comparable with that of the top portion of the trunk of the body of th cowherd in a wall-painting from the of the statues at Kizil, dated to the first phase of painting in the Kucha s (ending in the 6th century AD).[5] Thi feature may be similar to the muscul treatment of the male body in earlie Gandhara sculpture.[6] Apart from the regular halo, there is behind it anoth elliptical halo (or stela) with its lowe portion cut off. The presence of a sim type of nimbus or stela can be seen *inter alia* in the paintings of Kumtur (dated *c.* 8th-9th century AD and Karashahr (dated *c.* AD 650-750) an in sculptures from Kizil (dated *c.* 6th century AD).[7]

As on cover A, cover B also displa the *dhyani* Buddha Amitabha. On th lower portion appears a male figure standing on a lotus in the *tribhanga* The figure wears a short dhoti and different kinds of ornaments includi crown. A scarf adorns him as in the of Avalokitesvara. His left hand rest his waist and holds a pot (*kamandal*

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while his right hand is in *varada-mudra*, bestowing a boon to a devotee kneeling before him with folded hands in *anjali-mudra* (Fig. 4). P. Banerji identifies the deity as Padmapani Lokesvara.[8] But the *kamandalu* clearly distinguishes him as Maitreya.[9] The most striking feature of the figure of Maitreya is the slight projection of the right eye. As shown by J. Chakravarti, the tradition of depicting the extended eye can be traced to *c.* 6th century AD.[10]

The colours noticeable in the paintings on covers A and B are white, black, light blue, Indian red, olive green and orange. Their tones are muted and pleasing to the eye. Unfortunately both the pictures have suffered from natural wear and tear.

The longer sides of the first (cover A) of the pair of covers numbered 80-115 measures 27.5 centimetres, while both of its shorter sides are 7.5 centimetres in length. Cover B has its longer sides measuring 27 centimetres and 27.5 centimetres. Its shorter sides are 8 centimetres and 7 centimetres. Each of the covers has a hole.

On cover A, three seated male figures can be noticed against a blue background adorned with different kinds of flowers. Each of the three figures sits on a lotus, in *vajra-paryanka-asana.* The hands of the figures depicted on the side are in *samadhi-mudra,* while those of the middle one are in *dharmachakra-pravartanamudra.* Though each of the three figures wears a monk's long orange robe, the right shoulder of the figure in the middle is bare. Each of the three figures has auspicious marks on the throat, a halo and an outer nimbus or stela (in the shape of an ellipse with its bottom cut off). The nimbus of the central figure is ornamented (Fig. 5).

The central figure can be recognized as representing the Buddha. But the identification of the two side figures is not certain, though one of them may be taken as an icon of Amitabha. Professor D. C. Bhattacharyya has suggested that the three figures may fit the formula of *trisarana,* referring to salutations to the Buddha, *Dharma* and *Sangha.*

Cover B depicts four figures against a background similar to that of the picture on cover A. Two of them, with a halo and an outer nimbus or stela, surely represent some divinity. The figures sit cross-legged on a lotus. They seem to wear trousers or pyjamas and have the upper portions of the body bare. Each of them wears a long garland and different types of ornaments including a crown tied to the head with a filet. The right hand of one of them is in *abhaya-mudra*—the gesture of granting protection from fear, while the left hand resting on the lap holds a *kamandalu.* The latter is identified as the figure of Maitreya. The right hand of the other figure is in *vitarka-mudra,* while the left hand rests on the lap. Just by the upper right (proper left) side of the stela, or outer nimbus of this figure is shown a lotus with a head issuing out of it. If the latter feature has any connection with the figure in question, we may have here a representation of Padmasambhava ("lotus-born"), the famous Buddhist teacher from U-rgyan or Oddiyana (in the Swat area not far from Gilgit), who was invited to Tibet by the Tibetan King Khri-arong-Ide-btsan (*c.* AD 754 or 755-97).[11]

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Both the icons sit with the faces turned slightly towards the left (proper right) looking at two devotees, one a male and the other in all probability a female. Both the devotees, shown in profile, are kneeling. The female (?) figure holds a garland and the male holds a wreath and a lampstand, all obviously meant for worshipping Maitreya and Padmasambhava (?) (Fig. 6).

The rain of flowers in the background of the figures on both the covers reminds us of the backgrounds of Kizil (Kucha) paintings of the 7th century AD punctuated with "stellar motifs (and) a rain of flowers" (and sometimes with fruits and petals).[12] As in the case of the pictures on the other covers, here also, gliding, line, and shading by colour impart a sense of volume to the bodies. The flying ends of the filet of Maitreya's crown betray Iranian (Sassanian) influence. The faces of the icons are roundish and indicate a tendency towards the bloated type of face characterizing Kashmiri bronzes from about the 9th century onwards.

These considerations date the covers to the 7th or 8th century AD. On the other hand, if we are right in recognizing one of the icons as Padmasambhava of the 8th century AD, then the pictures cannot be dated earlier than that period. So these covers may be dated *c.* 8th century AD.[13]

Stylistically the miniature paintings on the wooden covers need not be dated after *c.* AD 800. While the covers numbered 80-115 have to be dated to the 8th century, the other can be placed still earlier in the post-Gupta period.[14] This inference is in consonance with the archaeological data assigning the Nawapur manuscripts between the 6th to 8th century and suggesting *c.* AD 800 as the terminal date for anything yielded by stupa C.[15]

In that case the Nawapur miniature paintings on the three pairs of covers are to be placed much earlier than the earliest well-known miniature paintings in the Indian subcontinent supplied by a manuscript of the *Ashtashasrika-prajnaparamita* dated in the regnal year 6 of the Pala King Mahipala (1)[16] that is, in *c.* AD 982.[17] The Nawapur (Gilgit) miniatures antedate the Pala miniatures. There is nothing surprising in this inference. The literary tradition of miniature painting can be traced to a still earlier period.[18]

As pointed out in our discussion, the Nawapur (Gilgit) miniatures indicate certain features of considerable stylistic and iconographic interest. Taking all these factors into account, the miniatures concerned must be considered as among the most precious objects of Indian art.

Notes

1. *Quarterly journal of the Mythic Society* vol. XXX, no. 1 (1939-40): 1f.
2. S. K. Saraswati, *Palayugara Chitrakala* (in Bengali) (Calcutta, 1978), p. 133; J. Chakraborti, *Techniques of Indian Mural Paintings*, p. 841 and pl. 4.
3. P. Pal, *Bronzes of Kashmir* (New Delhi, 1975), p. 30.
4. S. K. Saraswati, *Tantrayana Art Album* (Calcutta, 1977), p. XXVI.
5. M. Bussaglio, *Painting of Central Asia* (Geneva, 1963), pp. 71-72; *Encyclopaedia of World Art* vol. 1 (New York, etc., 1958), col. 832.
6. J. Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhara* (Cambridge, 1960), figs. 145-146; P. Pal, *Early Sculpture of Kashmir* (Leiden, 1986), fig. 80.
7. H. Hartel and M. Yaldiz, *Along the Ancient Silk Routes, Central Asian Arts, From the West Berlin State Museums* (New York, 1982), p. 119, no. 52; p. 123, no. 59; p. 125, no. 62; L. Hambis and others, *L' Asie Centrale histoire et civilisation* (Paris, 1977), p. 116, no. 62; p. 121, no. 62. A similar feature is noticeable behind several Buddhist icons drawn on rocks in the Chilas area in northern Kashmir (A. H. Dani, *Chilas the City of Nanga Parvat (Dyamar)* [Islamabad, 1983], pp. 145, 147, 149, etc.).
8. *Oriental Art* vol. XIV (1968): 114.
9. S. K. Saraswati, *Tantrayana Art Album*, p. XVI.
10. J. Chakravarti, "Indian Miniature Painting: Development from East to West," *Dimensions of Indian Art: Pupul Jayakar Seventy*, ed. Lokesh Chandra and Jatindra Jain (Delhi, 1986), p. 69. See also the *Vishnudharmottara*, pt. III, ch. 41, vv. 7-8 for a possible reference to the drawing of exaggerated or extended eyes. This text is datable to *c.* 7th century AD. The projected eye became a popular feature in the drawings of Western India during the early mediaeval age. The same feature is noticeable also in early mediaeval paintings at Alchi in Ladakh (Kashmir) (R. Goepper, *Alchi* [Köln, 1984], p. 17, pls. 4-5).
11. *Padma thang-yig*, f. 128b-129b, and 131b-132a; D. Snellgrove and H. Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet* (London, 1968), pp. 97-98 and 275; T.W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet—A Political History* (New Haven and London, 1967), pp. 34f.
12. M. Bussaglio, *Painting of Central Asia*, pp. 78 and 81.
13. J. P. Losty probably referred to the pages of the Gilgit manuscripts and not to the three pairs of painted covers when he observed that "their only decorative elements are concentric roundels of considerable size and a few elaborately designed versions of the Buddhist *dharmachakra*" (J. P. Losty, *The Art of the Book in India* [London, 1982], p. 18).
14. M. S. Kaul Shastri wanted to place the covers to different periods between the beginning of the 7th to the end of the 9th century. (*QJMS*, vol. XXX, no. 1, p. 8). But he was wrong in attributing some of the manuscripts yielded by stupa C to *c.* 9th century AD and in thinking that the few other manuscripts are in Tibetan characters (ibid., pp. 6-8). P. Banerji has not furnished any reason while assigning the covers (80-116 and 80-117) to *c.* 9th century or later (*Oriental Art*, vol. XIV [1968]: 117). Far more plausible is J. Williams' hypothesis dating them to *c.* 7th or 8th century. *Journal of Central Asia*, vol. IV, no. 2 [1981]: 15, f.n. 12).
15. For a full discussion on the date of stupa C at Nawapur B. N. Mukherjee, "The Dating of the Contents of the Nawapur (Gilgit) Stupa No. C and its Contents," in *Journal of Central Asia*, vol. X, no. 2 Islamabad, 1987): 23-36.
16. *Palayugara Chitrakala*, pp. 37-38, and 59-60; illustrations on pp. 35 and 38.
17. *Journal of the Asiatic Society* (1976), p. 98
18. In the early century AD Fa-hsien drew "pictures of images" while staying at Tamralipti (*Fo-kuo-chi*, ch. XXXVII). He was probably drawing miniature paintings.

Book Reviews

Title	:	**Challenges of Transformation: Built Environment in Islamic Countries**
Editor	:	Yasmeen Lari
Publisher	:	Pakistan Council of Architects and Town Planners
Format	:	28 x 22.5 cm., 255 pages
Price	:	Not given

This book has been published at a time when the so-called international style, the universal language of the Bauhaus as well as the Corbusierian rationality of the house being a machine to live in, is increasingly being challenged all over the world. It has also arrived at a time when the world at large is acknowledging the reality—that development does not necessarily mean either Westernization or secularization. This collection of papers amongst other things, sets out to analyse the normative qualities that constitute the Islamic nature of a culture.

Even in the industrial West the international architecture of the earlier decades has come under scrutiny and a variety of experiments passing under the rather nebulous blanket term "Post-Modernism" claim to address the special, individual needs of man.

Amidst all these cultural debates, developmentalists in the Third World are coming to terms with the fact that the early optimism of the '50s has given way to the disillusionment of the '80s. Development has not brought about a better distribution of wealth and imported solutions to problems are often unworkable either on functional or cultural grounds or on both. This has led to some serious soul-searching amongst designers, architects, town planners and developmentalists from a variety of disciplines—the crucial questions are equity and cultural identity. Modern multi-storeyed low cost housing is proving to be non-functional when a housewife poses a simple question—"Where will my chicken go?" Cultural symbols like Islamabad, the planned capital of Pakistan, literally the city of Islam, have in them as much Islamic characteristics as a downtown Boston supermarket. It is questions of relevance and identity that have led to a new discourse on design and development.

The book is basically the proceedings of a conference—the *First Conference of Architects and Town Planners of Islamic Countries*, held in Lahore. Like all conference proceedings it has a medley of papers of varying standards and has all the basic requirements of protocol intact. In fact, had the editor Yasmeen Lari attempted to bring it out in the form of a book, much of the needless repetitions and platitudes could have been avoided. It does detract the attention of the serious reader. Secondly, the absence of any photographs, ground-plans and so on makes it extremely difficult for a reader unused to the rather extensive terrain covered in this conference, to follow some of the arguments, particularly in the section dealing with the conservation of old cities.

Despite such flaws, the editor and the conference co-ordinator must be sincerely congratulated for bringing in people from disparate disciplines together to discuss issues pertaining to the shaping of the visual environment in Islamic countries and arriving at some workable 'Resolutions,' a list of which appears in the concluding pages of the book.

Altogether eighteen papers have been included in this collection under three broad rubrics: six papers under "History and Heritage," seven on "Conservation and Continuity" and five on "Contemporary Needs." Also included are five major speeches by planners and bureaucrats involved in planning.

The papers cover both a wide range of interests and encompass a large geographical area along with the host country Pakistan—Egypt, Sudan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Iraq and Bangladesh.

Dr Mahbub ul Haq, the Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Pakistan, raised the question of shelter for the millions of under-privileged citizens of the Islamic states and provided statistical data to emphasize the magnitude of the problem of shelter for the poor in Pakistan. He exhorted the assembled architects to find "indigenous solutions" as partial solutions "borrowed from alien experience" had proved unsatisfactory.

The section on historical legacies range from straightforward summaries of national architectural histories to analytical papers on what constitutes genuine Islamic revivalism and how this ideology is confronted with forces antithetical to its precepts.

Ekram's paper on Bangladesh simply highlights the synthesis in Bangladeshi architecture from the pre-Islamic vernacular traditions to the Moghul, British colonial and Louis Kahn international to the self-conscious quest of Islamic idioms in modern architecture. He presents Bangladesh as a melting-pot of ideas and eclecticism of styles still waiting for its own identity.

Bassioumi from Cairo in trying to analyse what constitutes a genuine revival, feels that a continuity or a perceived continuity is an essential constituent. Thus, while ancient Egyptian civilization cannot be revived since the links have been completely snapped, Islamic aesthetics and design principles can be revived. He warns his readers against the mere imitation of form and decoration "without deep involvement with Islamic architectural reasoning."

Bassioumi, I feel has hit the nail on the head. The crux of the whole problem probably lies in the fact that most architects are trained in the West or educated in Western-oriented architecture schools and so this "discontinuity" that Bassioumi alludes to in quite another context, is most evident in the modern educational process. Thus, when architects design buildings they only scratch the surface of their cultural constructs and once the veneer of this surface ornamentation is removed, the buildings look unabashedly non-descript and soulless. A combination of analytical methodology and cultural studies has yet to evolve in most of the non-European educational curricula.

Hamman Tukur Saad's paper on Sudan identifies the clientele for residential buildings and in doing so he draws the reader's attention to several interesting facts about Sudanese society. What is interesting is that the modern affluent client expresses a preference for a life-style and with it opts to stay in a particular part of the town. The Westernized élite who have a nominal allegiance to Islam prefer a bungalow with "externalised space" arrangements, while the traditional élite prefer the courtyards, the "private internal spaces," with the main courtyard separate for the master of the house and another separate space for the wives and female guests, following the Islamic principles of segregation on the basis of sex. He also refers to the kind of compartmentalization that goes on whereby an élite householder could have two residences one for himself and his family and the other in the GRA for his Western or Westernized friends as a kind of guest-house. The whole attitude rests on a number of assumptions. He is emphatic in stating that Islamic layout or spatial arrangement does not mean that Western technology should not be adopted; it is the age-old quest for Western technology without, in Saad's words, Western or "modern institutions of corruption." This presupposes a fairly static Islamic culture and a dynamic technological culture. It is this bifurcation that has tantalized many a moderniser from the very early stages of Western impact. Whether such a static/dynamic equation is feasible or even desirable is a matter of personal opinion. I cannot see how, for example, women's emancipation or increased professionalism amongst the female work-force can resolve the cultural issues of purdah or women's segregation and when such changes take place, can architecture remain oblivious of them?

The paper on Malaysia by Idrus is a doctrinaire exhortation for a kind of return to the pristine state of Islam, a state of existence in

which no non-Muslim will affect the lives of Muslims in their plans and programmes. This is possibly the price to be paid by those that passionately advocate exclusivity and romanticize the past as a prerequisite for identity.

The paper from Yugoslavia deals with the metaphysical connotations of Islamic geometry and architectural proportions, while a paper on Madura, Indonesia deals with distinct Madurese Islamic architecture as planned by the transmigrators—the government sponsored migrants from Madura into Kalimantan. This is a paper on vernacular architecture and its power to keep a community together or rather it could be looked the other way round—as to how their architecture and environmental planning reflects their village solidarity. The problem as always of Governments trying to build nation states out of disparate groups of people is how much cultural identity is compatible with national solidarity. This balance is not simply an academic but a highly inflammable political issue in most of the newly emerging states of Asia.

The section on "Conservation and Continuity" begins with an interesting speculative question—what is to be preserved—what is old? Does conservation have something to do with aesthetic value judgments? Do buildings have an existential quality? And are modern cities built on the "exploitation of life by Industry" as "a single direction odyssey?"

The opening paper is followed by six case studies of conservation experiments in different Islamic countries.

The concluding section of the book deals with contemporary needs. Here it focuses on the biggest dilemma of all—the balance. How much of the so-called modernization is required and how should it be balanced against Islamic prescriptions, especially when Islamic states have failed to keep up with Western economic and technological progress? There is no ready-made modern Islamic model—it is for our generation to be pioneers in a field and given the educational training and a colonial mind, the unhappy alternatives often verge between conceptually stagnant fundamentalism and a cultural vacuum. The urgency to act becomes particularly clear as most cities are growing at an enormously fast rate without concommitant industrialization and economic development thus creating the dismal image of Third World urban slums. A number of suggestions spreading over a wide spectrum of disciplines and activities has been suggested to check this rural-urban migration. Other papers express anxiety over young architects going overboard in this quest of identity and caught up in ego trips of being known as innovators.

The paper by Ismael Serageldin, of the World Bank's Urban Projects Division offers a penetrating and systematic analysis of the major problems confronting the Islamic world. He sets out by pointing out that the Muslim world today is extremely heterogeneous and that despite all the talks of an Islamic solution, problems are stated and tackled in terms of individual nation states. Having said that much, he tackles the problems of the Third World cities—problems of poverty and insufficient access to basic amenities and offers solutions in terms of participatory design—of the poor building their own shelters with the Public Sector providing land and infrastructural facilities, of slums being upgraded rather than destroyed as new buildings in old slums are not yet financially feasible and suggests building basic accommodations for rent for the very poor who cannot even participate in building their own shelters. These are suggestions for the poorer countries of the Islamic world.

The final section of the book contains recommendations which can be summed up by simply stating that Islamic Town Planning and Architecture must be critically studied, documented and understood before it can be accommodated in the modern environment and that a Council of Islamic Architects and Town Planners must undertake such a task.

The problems stated are so much shared by most of the Third Wor countries that I for one would wish that it had suggested a wid participation, not confining it to Islamic countries alone, but th only shows that people like me who feel strongly secular in matte concerning human suffering find it difficult to understand tl pragmatic and ideological entities separating human communitie Suffice it to say, some of the papers are very interesting and raise number of issues—Asian design is still finding its way and hopeful some answers will emerge if enough issues are identified—we a still in the diagnostic, not prescriptive stage.

Rajeshwari Gho

Title	:	**The Bakreshwar Temple—A Study on Continuity ar Change**
Writer	:	Buddhadeb Chaudhuri
Publisher	:	Inter-India Publications, Delhi
Format	:	22x14 cm., xii, 104 pages with 9 plates
Price	:	Rs. 60.00

Anthropological and social studies of temples and sacred shrines the Hindus have attracted the attention of anthropologists since tl late fifties. 'The Bakreshwar Temple—A Study on Continuity an Change' by Buddhadeb Chaudhuri is a study of a temple locate in the Birbhum district which is one of the comparatively le developed districts of West Bengal.

In this volume the writer sums up some of the salient feature pertaining to the temple complex as well as some of the relate problems. Bakreshwar village, situated in between Suri (distri headquarters) and Dubrajpur (a mercantile township), gaine significance as being one of the fifty-one *pithas* (sacred centre where, according to tradition, the limb of the Devi (Great Mothe fell. The main temple is built in a typical Rekha Deul Style an is dedicated to Bakreshwar or Bakranath. It contains a lingam (th phallus emblem of Shiva) as well as the Devi temple, containin an octo-alloy image of Mahisasuramardini (Durga killing the buffal demon) of a later date. The dedicatory inscription on the nortl eastern corner of the temple records that it was erected by on Darpanarayana, who called himself a devotee of Sri Radha an Krisna (that is, Vaishnava by faith) in the Saka year 1683 corre ponding to AD 1761. It is indeed interesting to note here that devout Vaishnavite is responsible for the erection of a Shaivit shrine. Although the site is primarily a centre of Shiva and Shak worship, we find here the existence of other religious faiths an beliefs including that of the Vaishnava, Tantric, and Aghori sect Several small-sized Shiva temples following the same architectur style as that of the main Shiva temple cropped up around the mai shrine at different times under the patronage of wealthy devotee Nine hot springs located near the site are treated as equally sacrec In addition, the adjoining *Mahasasana* (The Great Burnin Ground) on the bank of the River Bakreshwar is also regarded a a sacred spot. It is believed that if a body is cremated at The Grea Burning Grounds the soul (*atma*) will go to heaven. Thus, we notic here the coexistence of several faiths and beliefs in a Shaiva dominated sacred site.

Until 1930, due to lack of transport and other facilities th popularity of the temple complex was restricted to the adjoinin regions of the district.

At the beginning, the worship of the principal deity and associated rituals were carried out by five *sevayets* (worshippers) and Brahmin *gosthis* or *vamsas* (families) in regular turns known as *pala*. To sustain the worship about 500 *bighas* (approximately 166.5 acres) of tax-free *debottar* land, was donated by the local king in the name of Lord Bakreshwar. This was distributed among the five principal *gosthis*. In due course, through splitting and inheritance, many families emerged which resulted in further subdivisions of the *debottar* land as well as the turn of service (*pala*) in the temple complex. The devotees from the neighbouring areas who visited the sacred complex on special auspicious occasions, established a kind of traditional bond known as *jajmani* ties with the *sevayet* Brahmin families. This tie or bond helped in developing a personal relationship between the *sevayet* Brahmins and the *jajmans* (devotees). Besides worshipping, the *jajmans* visit the sacred complex for performing many domestic ceremonies like name-giving, *upanayana* (wearing of the sacred thread), *shradha* (funeral purificatory rites) and marriage. Apart from regular traditional visitors, a substantial number of visitors from Calcutta and adjoining urban centres visit the temple specially during the winter on pleasure trips. These transitory visitors never establish the traditional *jajmani* ties with the *sevayet* Brahmins. At one time, the caste and social status of the devotees were of primary concern to the *sevayets*. Due to an increase in the number of *sevayets*, the lack of job opportunities, a growing craze for higher education and acute economic crisis, many *sevayets* of the present generation are turning towards business and non-traditional secular professions. It is interesting to note that most of the big and profitable shops and establishments in the village are owned by several *sevayet* families. These families, like their ancestors, still enjoy certain privileges in the socio-economic and political life of the area. In spite of the formation of an elected government and a registered committee consisting of representatives of the *sevayets* and two government nominees for looking after the temple affairs, the *sevayet* families still dominate the affairs of the temple complex.

The historical background of the site as well as the district, provided by the writer seems to be quite inadequate. The site primarily became famous as being one of the fifty-one *saktapithas*, associated with the goddess Papahara and Mahisasuramardini, according to the *Shivacharita* and *Pithanirnaya* texts respectively, her lord being Bakranath or Bakreshwar (another name of Shiva). The location of a river in the name of Papahara flowing on the southern side of the temple is significant. There is no mention of this sacred centre (*pitha*) in any early text. But references in later texts like *Pithanirnaya, Shivacharita* and *Annadamangala* by Bharatchandra, according to the late Professor D. C. Sircar, point out that the idea of *saktapithas* in Bengal did not develop before the 17th and 18th centuries. It was during this time that the temple of Bakreshwar as well as that of his consort (Shakti) was built here. Although the main temples are not very old, the antiquity of the site—the district forming part of the ancient Rada country—is beyond question. Archaeological investigations undertaken from 1963-64 onwards, revealed the remains of a chalcolithic culture in several places of this district including Bakreshwar. Excavations at Haraipur (near Suri town) and Mahisdal (near Shantiniketan) in the recent past, gave significant evidence of a flourishing chalcolithic culture with characteristic black and red ware ceramics, the use of copper and microlithic tools at the lower level and subsequent changes into the iron-using phase. So far as the early historical periods are concerned, evidence is far from adequate. No definite evidence in support of Maurya, Sunga, Kushan, and Gupta periods is forthcoming from this district, although stray discoveries of silver punch-marked coins, Kushan and Gupta coins, have been reported from far-flung areas of the district. The historical picture of the district becomes clearer with the coming of the Pala and Sena kings into power. The famous Paikor inscription of the Chedi king Karna or Lakshmikarna (1041-72) and the Sian inscription of King Nayapala of the Pala dynasty (1027-43), both discovered from this district, shed interesting light on the history of the Palas in this region. After the Palas, the succeeding Sena kings also held supremacy over this region. Discoveries of several stone images belonging to the Pala and the Sena periods further attest their rule in this region. Adequate material is available to trace the subsequent history of this district till the present century.

Thus the survey undertaken by the present writer to trace the changes as well as the continuity of traditions in various spheres of the temple activities along with the consequent socio-economic changes in the present-day situation are indeed interesting. It will not be out of context to point out that there is a proposal to establish a thermal power project at Bakreshwar soon. When commissioned, this is sure to bring further changes in the socio-economic life of Bakreshwar in the near future.

The book would have been more useful if a map and a location plan of the temples and the adjoining sites were added.

Samir Kumar Mukherjee

Title	:	**Early Mughal Painting**
Writer	:	Milo Cleveland Beach
Publisher	:	Harvard University Press (1987)
Format	:	26 cm. x 17.5 cm., viii, 164 pages with 92 illustrations
Price	:	$30.00

Mughal painting is one of the few areas of Indian art history which has been intensely studied and researched in the last three decades. New materials like the Cleveland *Tuti-nama*, the Rampur *Tilasm* and zodiacal illustrations, the Prince of Wales Museum *Anwar-i-Suhaili*, the Hajipur astronomical manuscript and others have been discovered and published. Many major exhibitions displaying a large number of high quality Mughal miniatures have been organized and a good number of books, monographs, exhibition catalogues, and papers have been published in this period. Yet, in spite of increasing knowledge, problems continue to proliferate, and, as Dr Milo C. Beach has aptly observed in the Preface to his book *Early Mughal Painting*, 'we know enough of the Mughals now to realize that we know less than we have ever before thought.'

When Dr Beach was invited to deliver the biennial Polsky lectures in 1986, he decided to re-examine the available material and try to find out the contributions of Humayun and Akbar to the evolution of Mughal style. He also wanted to probe the true extent of contributions of some of the leading painters as he felt that the traditionalism of the individual painters continued and showed only gradual change in their concepts and compositions in response to foreign influences and imperial taste.

Dr Beach is eminently suitable to do justice to the subject as he has been working in this field for nearly three decades as a student, teacher, curator, and as a Guest Curator for several spectacular exhibitions on Mughal painting, and now as the Director of the Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, he has written many learned papers, monographs, and well-researched exhibition catalogues devoted to various aspects of Mughal painting and painters.

He has delivered three lectures, 'Humayun and the Young Akbar,' 'Akbar as Patron,' and 'Akbar and the Past,' which form the three sections of this book published as a superbly produced volume by the Harvard University Press for The Asia Society, New York. He has gathered a wealth of material including recently discovered examples, and has provided us with a major focus for further study. He has drawn particular attention to the works of Khwaja Abdus Samad and the contents of the recently discovered Fitzwilliam album to find out the contribution made by Humayun at Kabul and at Delhi on his return from a long exile. He postulates that Humayun was interested in images of familiar people, historical happenings, and even flora and fauna and it was easy for Akbar to attain such spectacular heights as he built on an established tradition. He also suggests that painters like Abdus Samad were no less important than their imperial patrons and played an important role in determining the character of the Mughal imperial studio. We may have to wait for more material and information before coming to a final conclusion. Dr Beach has himself stated in the Preface to his book that the study should be considered work-in-progress and read as a series of speculations.

It may be pointed out here that the painting of two birds in the Berlin album (Beach, plate 13) was correctly identified as a pair of Rosy Pastors in *Lalit-Kala*, No. 17, 1974, p. 39 and we also know of a painter called Bhagawati who contributed three miniatures (ff. 28a, 68b and 338b) to the *Shah nama* MS No. Add. 5600 in The British Library, London. (Das, 1978, p. 99, footnote 59).

Asok Kumar Das

Title : Art of India and Persia
Writer : Anis Farooqi
Publisher : B. R. Publishing Corporation, New Delhi
Format : 26.9 cm. x 29.5 cm. 104 pages with 74 plates
Price : Rs. 300.00

The book is not a survey of the arts of India and Persia as the title indicates, but the published form of Dr Anis Farooqi's thesis entitled 'The Synthesis of Indian and Persian Qalams in the Court of Akbar.' He undertook his research between 1968 and 1971 and received his degree from Agra University in 1972.

Since his research in this field a host of new material has been discovered and published. We now know much more about the contribution of the Persian masters recruited by Humayun and the working of the studios at Kabul, Agra, Fathepur-Sikri, Lahore and Allahabad. These have necessarily made the book somewhat dated.

The publishers have done a great disservice to Dr Farooqi by adopting a queer format for the book and printing every page with wide green margins. The poor choice and quality of the reproductions is regrettable. Some of the glaring mistakes in the captions of the plates are: (1) plate 46 is from a dispersed *Harivamsa* manuscript, not the *Razmnama*; (2) the *Jog Bashisht* illustration in plate 65 is dated 1602, not 1598; (3) plate 72 is from the first *Akbarnama* manuscript, *c.*1590-95, not from the second *Akbarnama* which has an illustration dated 1604; (4) and plate 74 is from The British Library *Anwar-i-Suhaili*, Add. 18579, *c.*1604-11, not from the *Nafahat-al-uns* manuscript.

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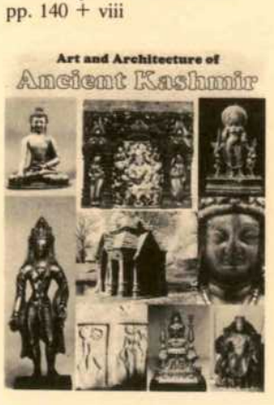

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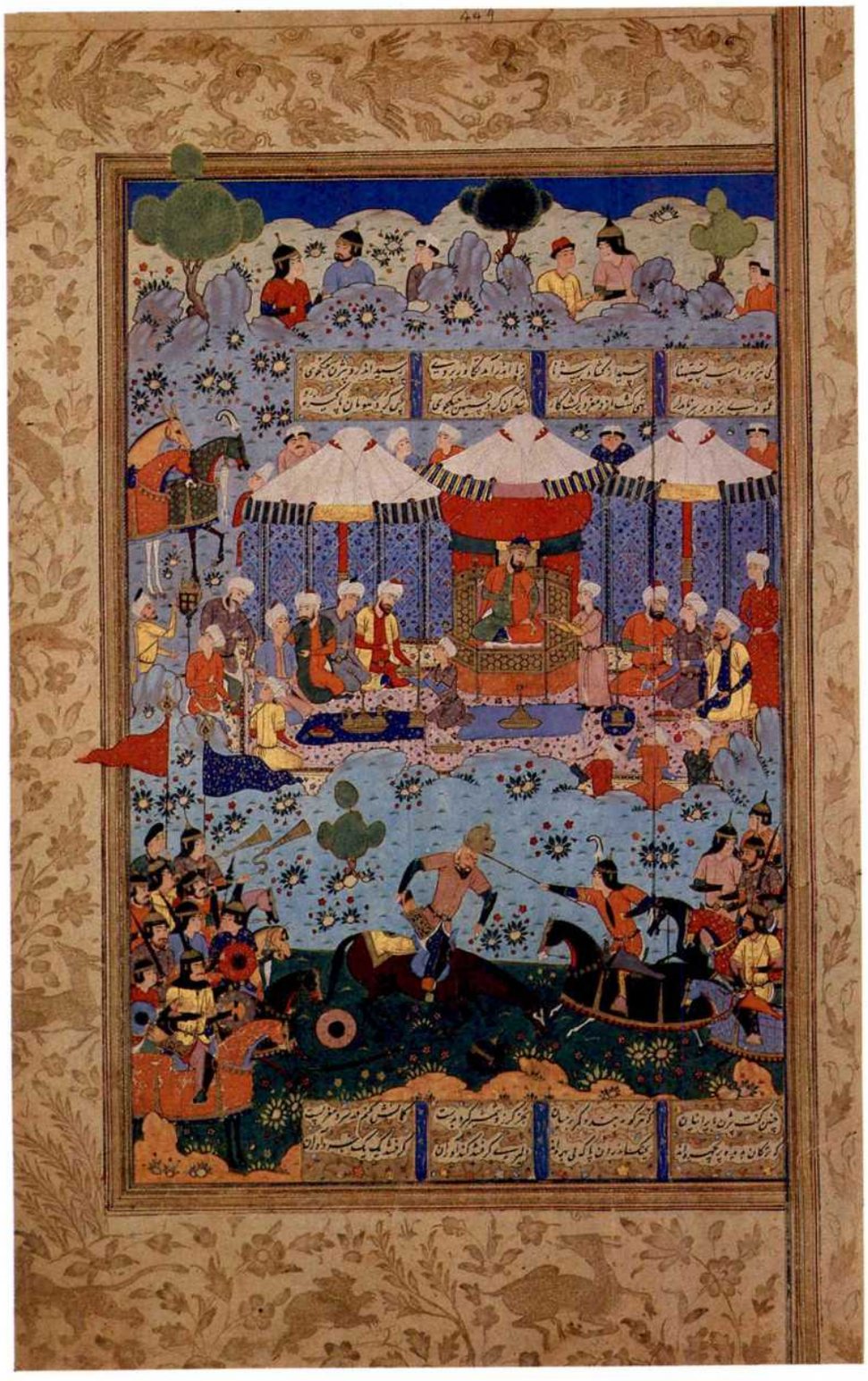

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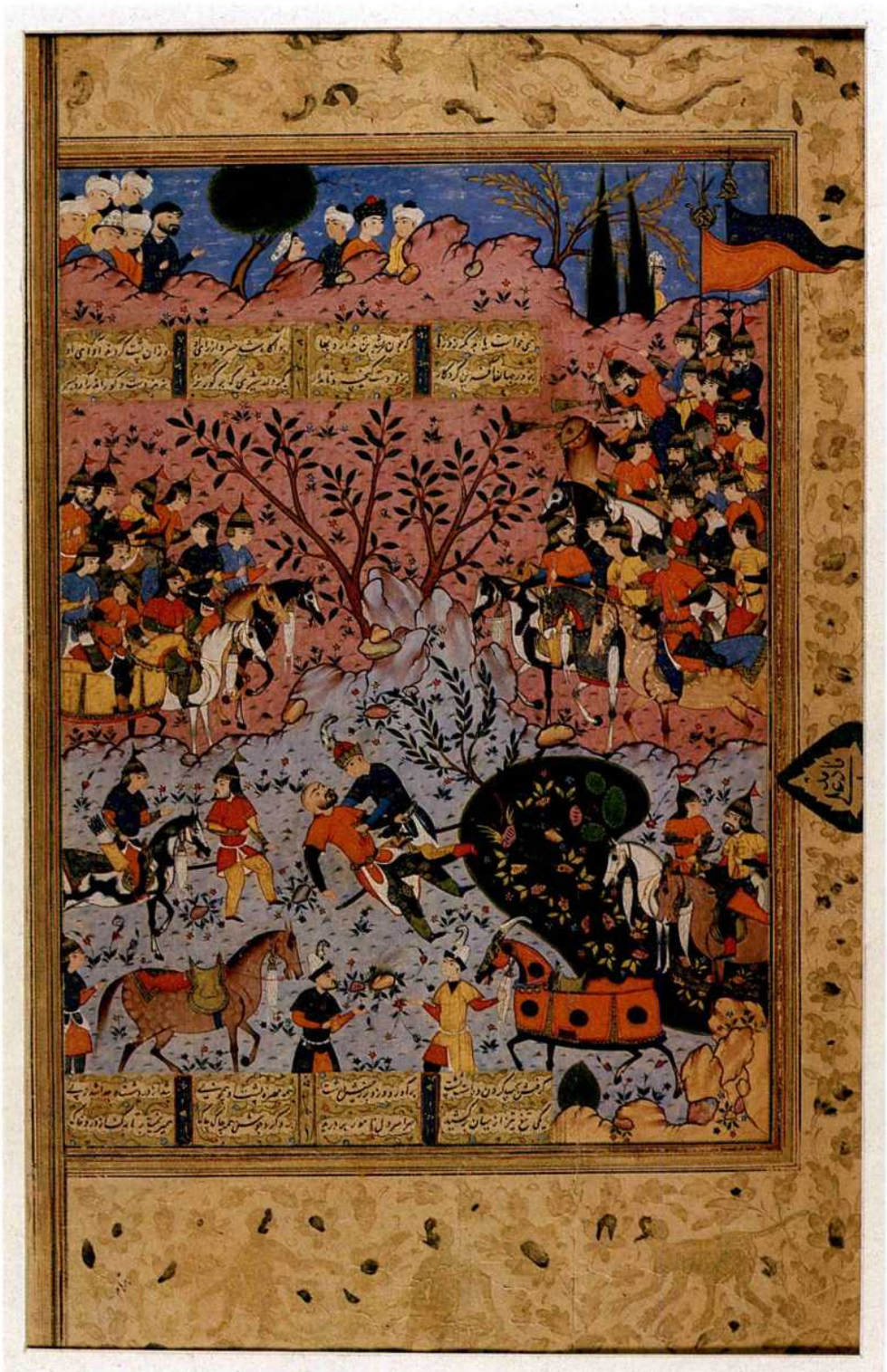

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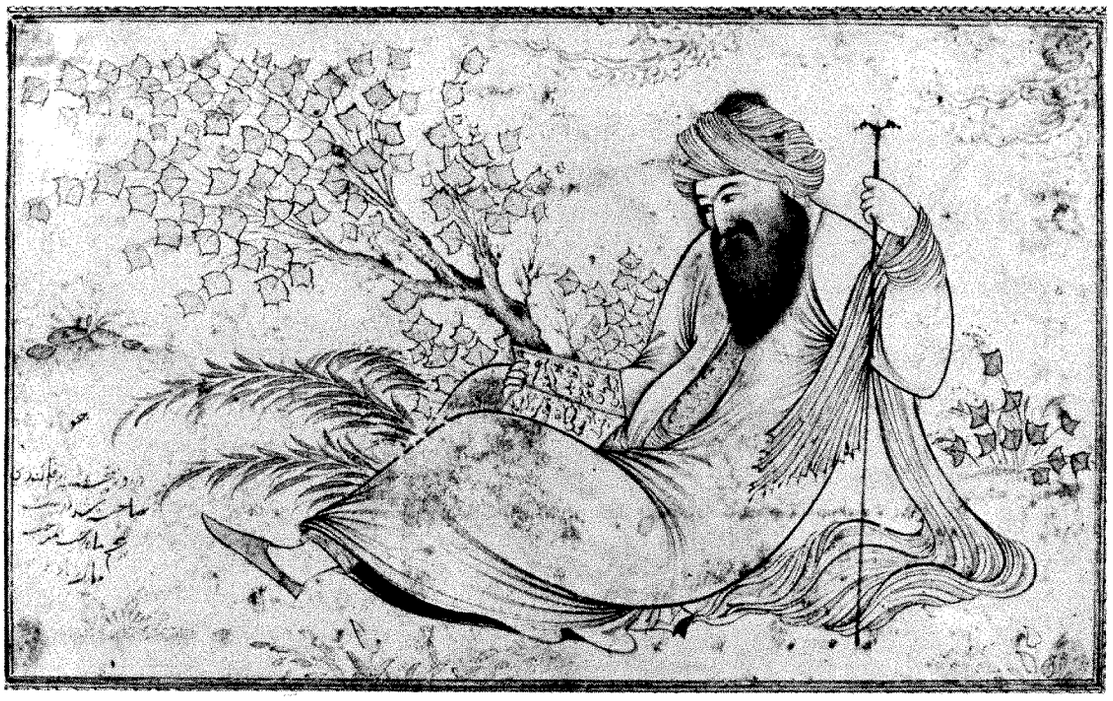

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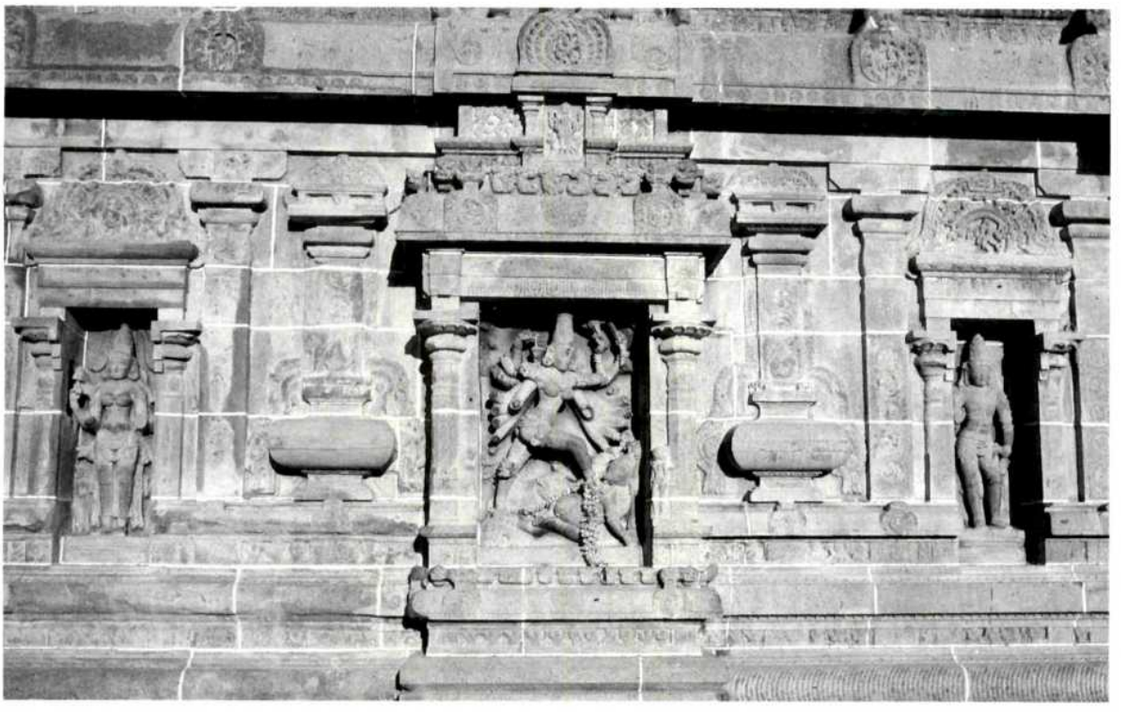

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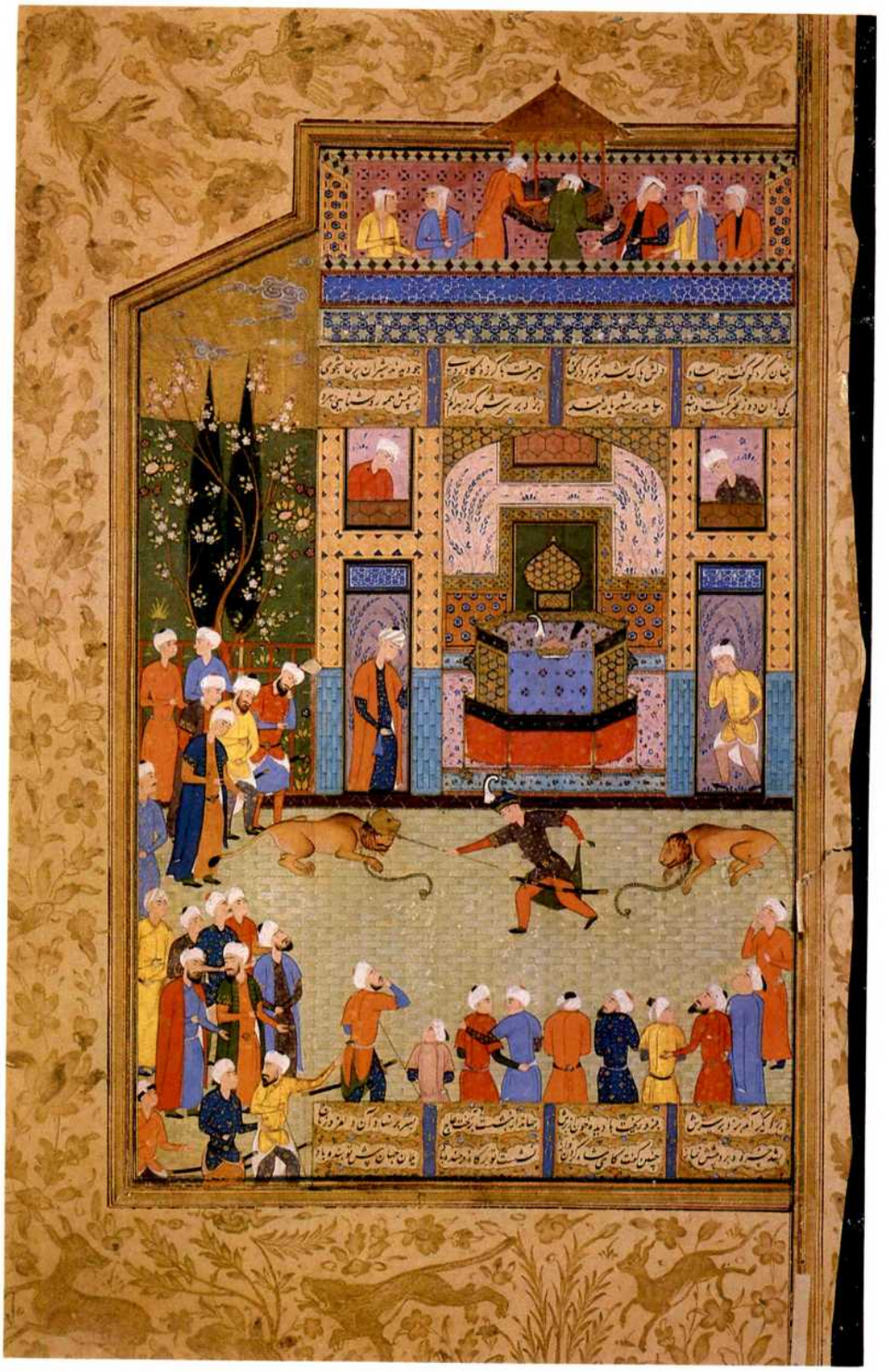

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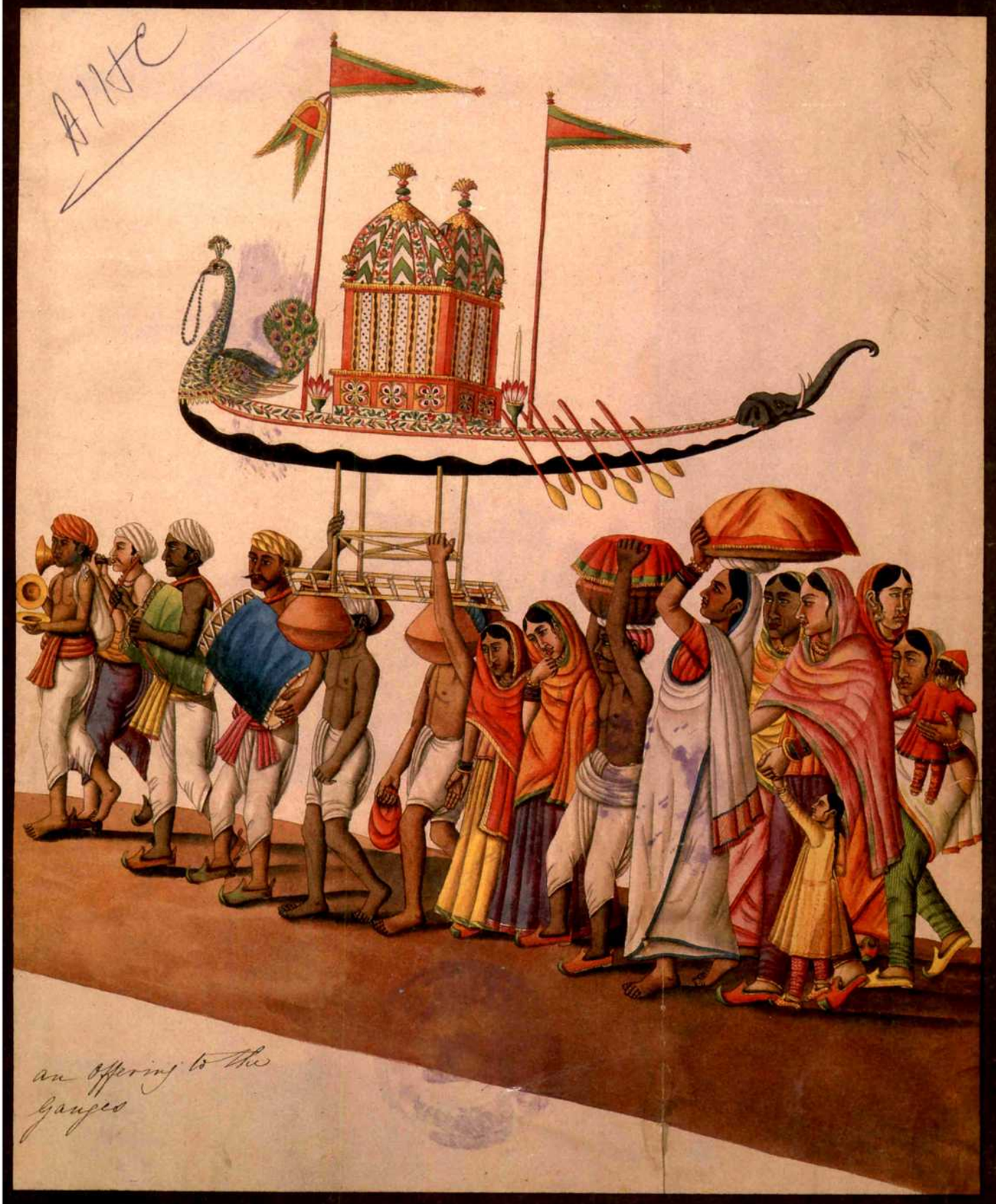

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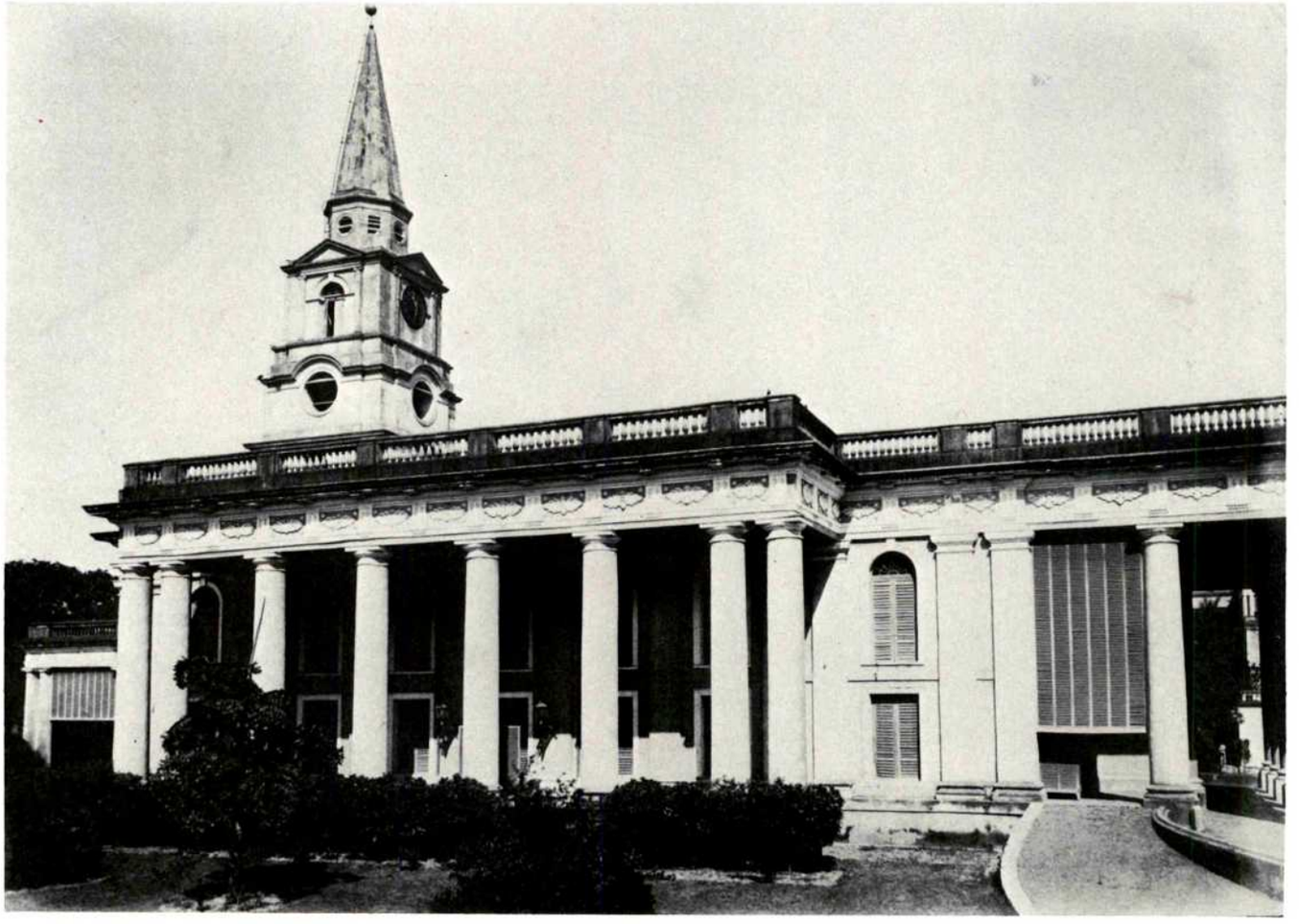

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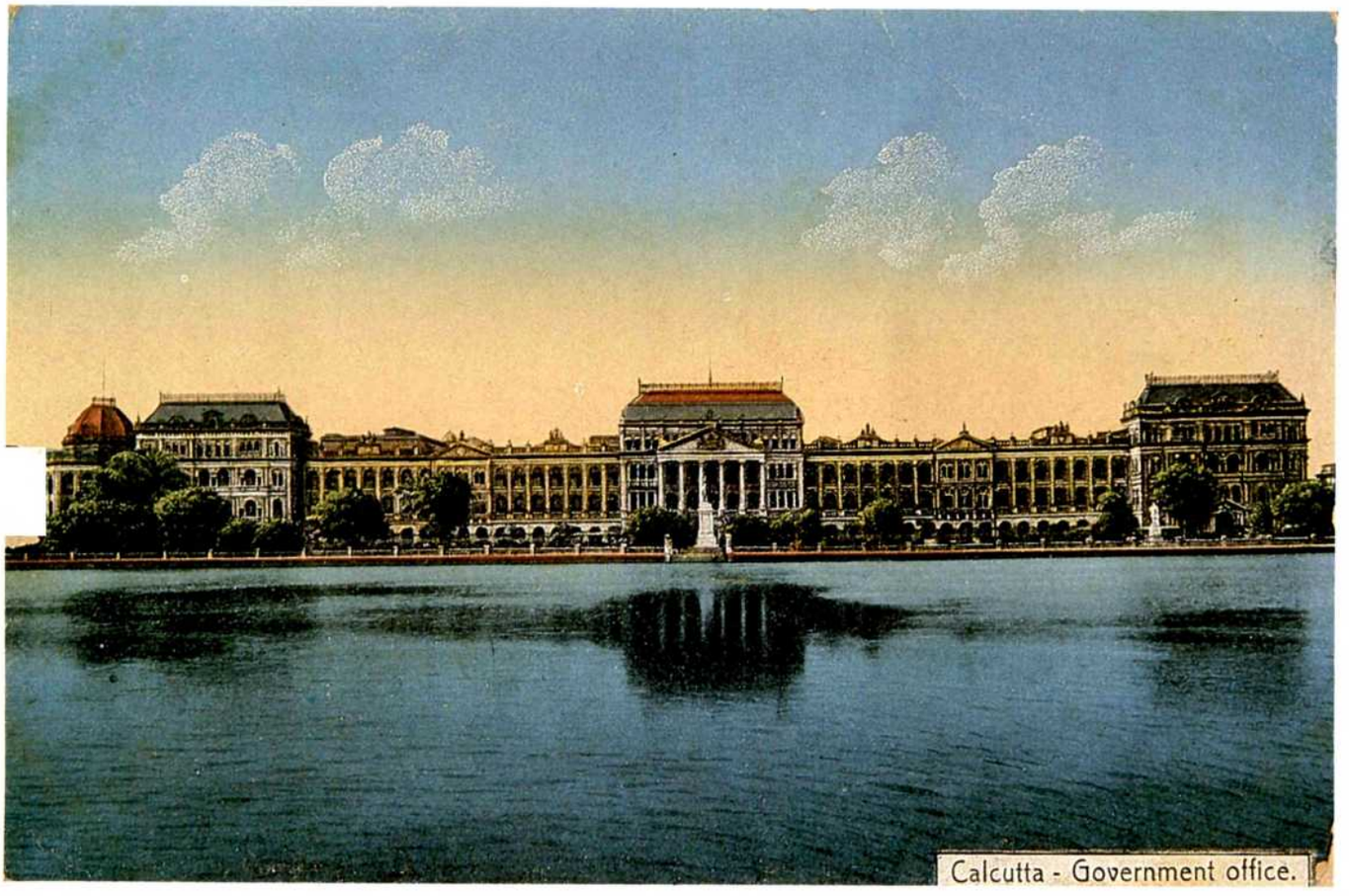

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CALCUTTA — City of Kali

Volume XLI No. 4

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A clay image of Goddess Sarasvati in worship. Calcutta, January 1990.
Photo: Pratapaditya Pal.

Kali, Calcutta, and Kalighat Pictures

Pratapaditya Pal

> Goddess, Great Lady of Tollus, Callie [Kali] Goddess Lady, let all your smell be far away from my face, I entreat you. Lead from here the other smelling ones. Lead away the other putrid ones.
>
> G. O. Trevelyan
> (translated from the Latin by Aditya Dehejia)

Ever since the British developed a group of three villages into a city, Calcutta has been variously characterized, deprecatingly most of the time, but occasionally with admiration. Before it was a century old, it was well known as the "city of palaces." Although much taller buildings have replaced most of the "palaces" that once lined the Maidan along Chowringhee and which provided an inspiring cityscape from the fort side, the aesthetic effect is not quite the same. By and large, however, Kipling's characterization, "city of dreadful night," has become the most familiar and over the years little has been done to prove the bard of imperialism wrong. At the other extreme, there can be no more ardent an admirer of the city than the Frenchman Dominique Lapierre, who recently described it (not perversely I hope) as the "city of joy," for which he has endeared himself to the narcissistic Calcuttans forever.

The most appropriate characterization of Calcutta would be to refer to it as the "city of Kali," honouring the goddess who presides over the city's destiny. She was there long before Job Charnock arrived on the scene. Although the present temple is not the original shrine, there seems little doubt that by the time Charnock decided to establish the British foot-hold in Bengal at the bustling village of Sutanuti, the region was already well known as the realm of Kali or Kalikshetra. The ghat or landing place on the river Hooghly where pilgrims alighted to go to the temple was already familiar as Kalighat. Unfortunately it is not known exactly when the region became famous as the seat of Kali, but originally the shrine was probably a simple hut located deep inside a tiger-infested jungle, somewhere on the maidan visited only by wandering ascetics, the kapalikas, and the most ardent worshippers of the goddess. A permanent temple was probably built sometime in the second half of the sixteenth century by Raja Vasanta Roy, the uncle of Maharaja Pratapaditya of Jessore, whose tutelary deity was also the goddess Kali. In fact, known as Jasoresvari, her image was handed over to Raja Man Singh (of Jaipur), the courtier of Akbar (1556-1605) for safe keeping. The image is still worshipped in the Amber palace, as every visitor to that fort knows. The original

temple at Kalighat seems to have been destroyed sometime in the eighteenth century and the present temple built over the earlier shrine by the Savarna Roychoudhuris, the local zamindars, from whom the East India Company bought the three villages—Sutanuti, Govindapur, and Kolkata, which formed the nucleus of the city. The present temple, reflects traditional Bengali architecture and is of the *athachala* or eight-roofed variety. It is said to have been completed in 1809. However, that the main temple and the ancillary hall known as *natamandapa* were already built is clear from comparing Baltazard Solvyns' engraving of 1807 with a contemporary photograph of the complex as seen in the illustrations.

Figs. 1, 2

Of all the countless Hindu deities encountered by the British in India, none captured their imagination as obsessively as did Kali. Almost every visitor or resident who kept a journal or a diary or wrote about his or her Indian experiences had something to say about the goddess. Most were also quite sure that the city's name was in fact derived from Kalighat. For instance, in his brief portrait of the city, the British artist William Simpson who arrived on October 29, 1859, wrote without any equivocation, "Calcutta derives its name from Kali Ghat, a sacred temple on the river Hoogly." And of course he did not fail to visit the temple.

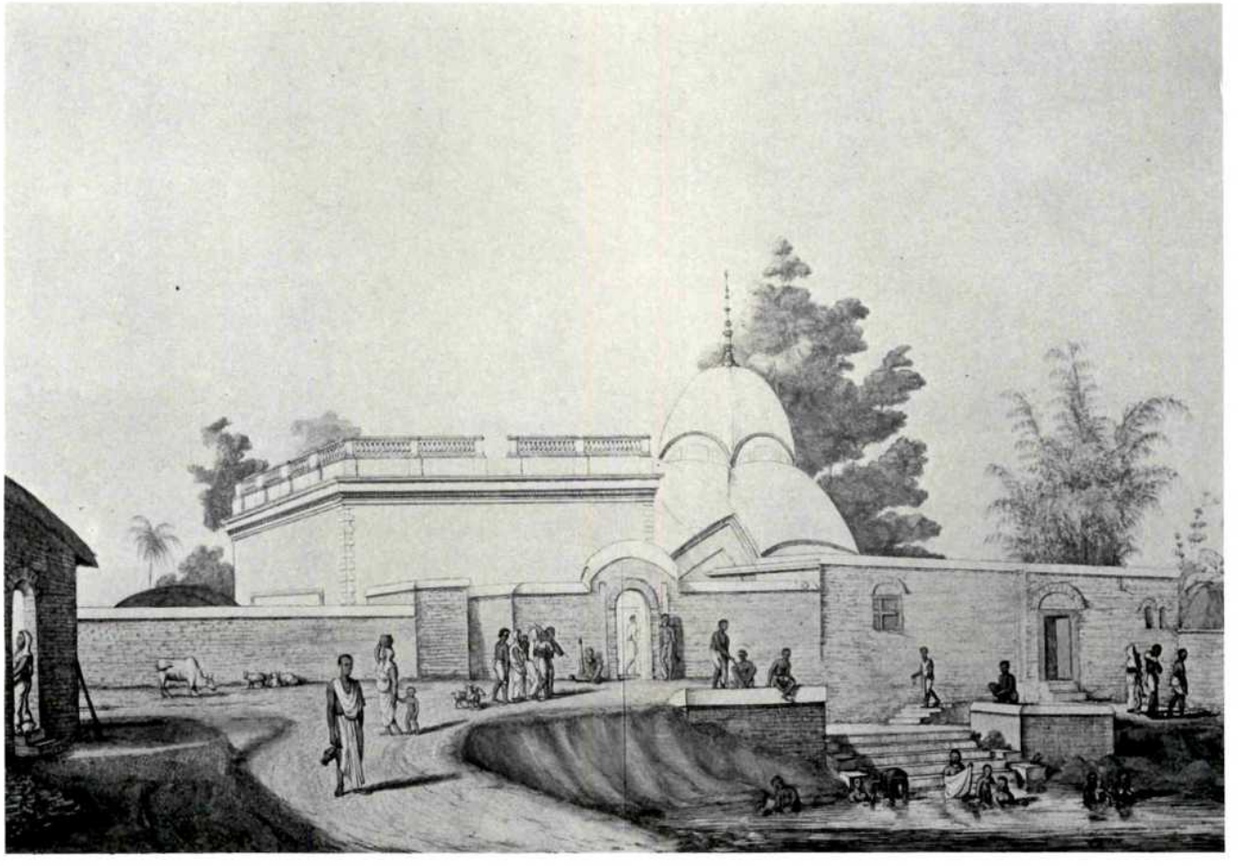
As a matter of fact, most European visitors who were intellectually and culturally curious visited the temple. One of the most fascinating descriptions of a European's visit to the temple was penned by G. O. Trevelyan in his *Competition Wallah* published in 1866. He visited the temple on the day of the hook swinging festival (*Charak*), which both fascinated and repelled the foreigners. So impressed was he with the processions, the ceremonies and rituals that he felt as though he was transported to ancient Athens. "If it had not been for the colour of the faces around," he wrote, "I should have believed myself to be on the main road to Eleusis in the full tide of one of the Dionysiac festivals."

It is interesting that Trevelyan should have thought of Athens, a city that was also named after its patron goddess Athena. It was common in India to name towns and cities after goddesses. Everyone may not be aware that Patna's ancient name was Pataliputra, Patali being the name of the *yakshi* who protected the city. Thus, just as the river in eastern India is known as Brahmaputra or the son of Brahma, so Patna was known as the son of Patali. Similarly, Bombay is a British distortion of Mumbai, a local goddess who may also be an ancient *yakshi.* The third example is Chandigarh (the fort of Chandi) in the Punjab, although as far as is known the shrine is not really in the city. None of these city goddesses, including Athena of Athens, is as powerful and living a presence as Kali of Calcutta. No wonder she has become famous up-country as Kali Kalkattawali.

Stereotyped notions of the goddess continue to haunt the European mind even today. This can be seen in the following observations by Geoffrey Moorehouse in his book *Calcutta:*

> The very name of Calcutta is derived from a symbol of fear and evil . . . There is no one at all more respected and feared than the goddess Kali who, like every other Hindu divine, has other names and forms as well . . . All the representations of Kali are designed to frighten an illiterate and superstitious mind more thoroughly than anything else in creation. She appears with devilish eyes, or with a tongue dripping blood with snakes entwined round her neck, or with a garland of skulls. She is Kali the Terrible and she is propitiated with daily sacrifice, as well as with flowers.

1. A contemporary view of the Kalighat Temple. Photo: Alok Dey.



2. *A View of the Pagoda of Calleegaut (Calygat).* Engraving by Baltazard Solvyns. 1807. Private Collection.

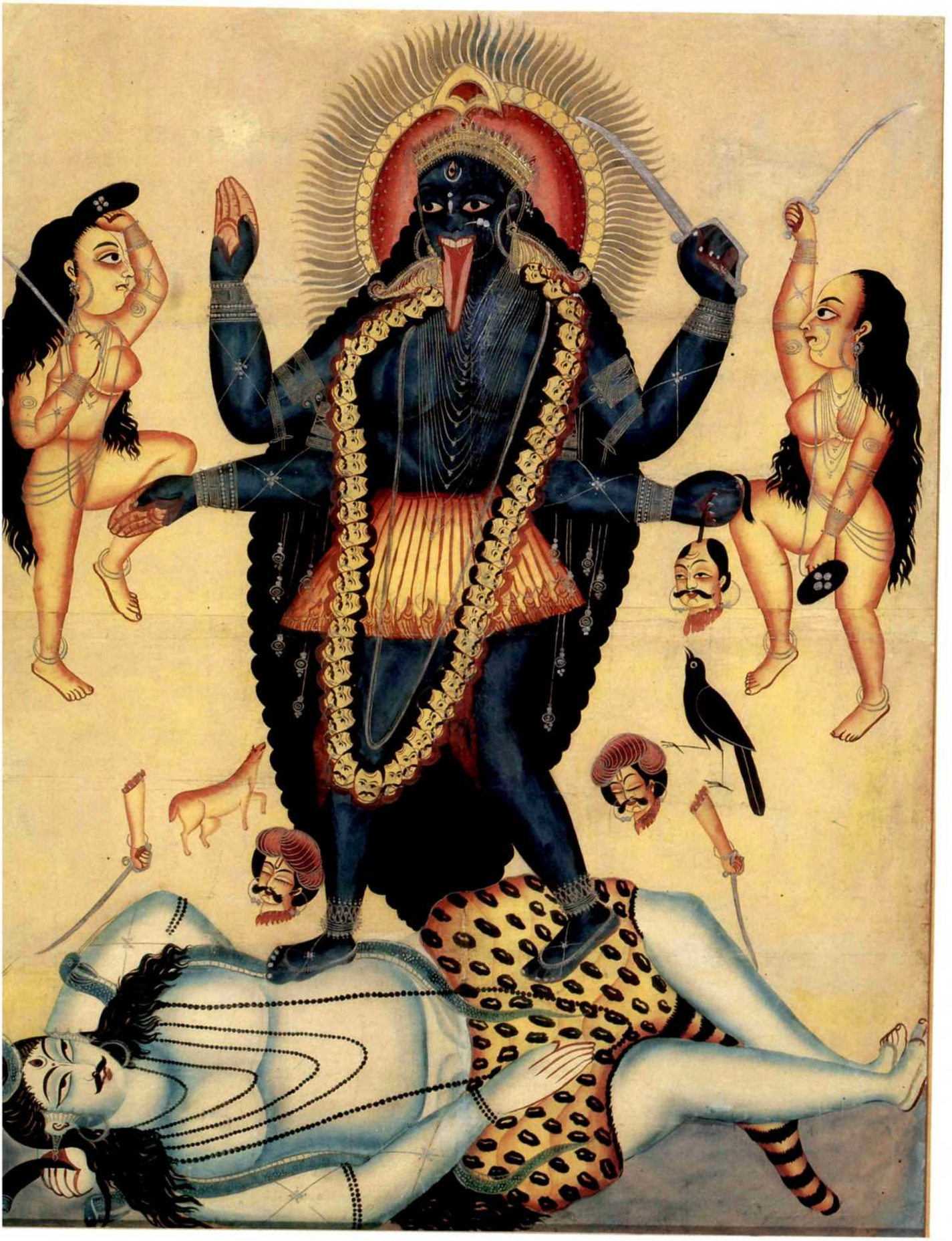
Kali continues to affect the Western mind, whether in the form of a satirical enactment of the daily sacrifice to her in the film *Help* by the British rock group, the Beatles, or in a work of art entitled *The Dinner* by the contemporary American artist Judy Chicago.

The fact remains that she was not "designed to frighten an illiterate and superstitious mind." But fear she did instil, even in the hearts of the officers and servants of the mighty East India Company. Christian though they were, and no matter how aesthetically repelled by her image, they did not dare ignore the patron goddess of the city. It was not uncommon for the Company to send special offerings to the temple in gratitude for favours such as a victory in a war. Indeed, another temple of Kali (and there are several) in the city is known as Firingee Kali, the word "firingee" being a general expression for Europeans and Eurasian Christians, because they used to frequent the shrine.

It is not surprising, therefore, that of all the luminaries who have been associated with Calcutta in its three centuries of existence, it is Kali who continues to dominate the imagination of most foreigners who visit the city and care about it. The latest is, of course, the German novelist Günter Grass, whose Calcutta diary has just been published under the title *Show Your Tongue*. Apart from inspiring the title of the book, Kali is a leitmotif both in words and pictures throughout the slim volume. For instance, when Grass stops somewhere to refresh himself with the cool milk of a green coconut and as a dark, haggard woman cuts the fruit with a machete, he sees Kali severing a demon's head with her sickle. (Curiously, he consistently refers to her *khadga,* or sword, as a sickle, perhaps in deference to the Marxists who now control the city's destiny). Kali figures both at the beginning and end of his poem from which the following verse is quoted:

> . . .Saw, in the holes of uncountable mouths
> the lacquered tongue of black Kali
> flutter red. Heard her smack her lips:
> I, numberless, from all the gutters
> and drowned cellars, I,
> set free, sickle-sharp I.
> I show my tongue, I cross banks,
> I abolish borders.
> I make
> an end. . .

A large number of drawings and paintings were also taken back home to graphically demonstrate the terrifying nature of the Hindu gods and goddesses. One *Fig. 3* such painting, rather a large one, by an anonymous Calcutta artist, vividly shows the type of image that typically characterizes the Bengali Kali. This is the classic icon of the goddess, familiar to everyone, the quintessential Kali who is naked except for her miniskirt of hacked-up arms and her garland of severed heads, who gleefully extends her tongue, eager to lap up the blood of her victims. She chops off the heads of demons, one of which she displays as a trophy in her lower left hand, with the sword she brandishes with her upper left hand. If such symbols are terrifying, her right hands emphasize her benign nature by offering both reassurance and compassion. Below her feet is the prostrate figure of her plump spouse Shiva, whose bluish-white complexion strongly contrasts with her black colour. The charnel ground where this *danse macabre* takes place is symbolized by a few severed limbs, a raven, a jackal, and two of Kali's



3. The goddess Kali. Opaque water-colour on paper by an anonymous artist. Calcutta, *c.* 1875. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Paul F. Walter Collection.

belligerent and bloodthirsty companions. This form is still worshipped with great festivities, in a clay image, every autumn in Calcutta and elsewhere in the country. The images are then immersed in the river or sea, a frenzied occasion vividly depicted in an engraving by Solvyns in the early nineteenth century.

Kali the goddess of death and destruction may well be one of the oldest personifications of divine power on the subcontinent. There is no doubt that originally she was characterized as dark or black, which is what the word Kali means. The masculine form, Kala, signifies both time and death. What is significant is that the Bengali Kali just described and illustrated has very little iconographic similarity with other forms of Kali worshipped elsewhere. Of course, the name Kali is used generically by the Hindus and every village goddess, whether she is worshipped as an image or in a numinous stone, is called Kali. But the North Indian Kali is an emaciated figure, like a hag with sunken cheeks and eyes, flying hair, pendulous breasts, usually with
Fig. 4 multiple arms and weapons, and seated on a corpse. She is known as Chamunda. In South India, however, Kali is a handsome, well-formed figure whose awesomeness is so
Fig. 5 underplayed that sometimes it is hardly noticeable. In the bronze image, illustrated here it is only the barely visible fangs that indicate her terrifying nature. It is note-

4. Chamunda or Dakshina Kali. Nepal, 17th century. Gilt copper alloy. Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi.

5. The goddess Kali. Tamil Nadu, 11th century. Copper alloy. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum Acquisitions Fund and funds provided by Harry and Yvonne Lenart.

worthy that neither the North Indian nor the South Indian Kali shows her tongue. Thus, iconographically the Bengali Kali is quite distinct. Like her South Indian counterpart she has a fleshy, well-formed body with full breasts and attractive hair. Both are semi-naked, but the Bengali Kali and Chamunda are adorned more gruesomely than the South Indian Kali. Also, the corpse on which Chamunda sits has been converted into Shiva by the Bengalis, who explain the significance of the servile husband in the following way: When Kali was on the war-path, the only way to stop her was by making her step on her husband's body. This was an unthinkable thing for a wife to do, which is why she immediately expressed her shame by sticking out her tongue, as the Bengalis often do. This is of course a charming but naive explanation. The Bengali expression is *jib kata* which means to "cut your tongue." Thus the extension of the tongue does not imply shame as much as an admission of guilt, to be punished by cutting off the tongue.

By sticking out her tongue and in other ways, the Bengali Kali may well reveal her Buddhist origin. Many Buddhist deities, particularly the angry goddesses of the Vajrayana pantheon, are shown trampling upon various creatures including deities and with their tongues hanging out of their mouths to drink blood. The Sanskrit expression is *lolajihva* and it has nothing to do with either shame or guilt. (For that matter, it may be noted that Tibetans used to stick out their tongues as they greeted a superior person

6. Kali of Kalighat Temple. Kalighat, 1875-1900. Opaque water-colour on paper. Chester and Davida Herwitz Family Collection.

7. Jagannath Temple triad. Kalighat, 1875-1900. Opaque water-colour on paper. Chester and Davida Herwitz Family Collection.

as a sign of respect). The Bengali Kali may well be an adaptation of such a deity as Ugratara of the Buddhists. It may be noted that Tara is a very important Buddhist goddess and the name is also a popular epithet of the Bengali Kali, whose other common appellation is Syama or the Green or Dark One. A form of Tara is known as Syamatara or Green Tara. It is not improbable that there was originally a Buddhist temple of Tara in the region of Kalighat which had been abandoned and was restored by the Hindus and converted into a shrine for Kali. Indeed, it is well known that in Bengal a great number of Buddhist shrines are now famous Hindu temples.

The image worshipped as Kali in the Kalighat temple is no less curious and differs visibly from the traditional Kali image, as is clear from a late nineteenth-century representation illustrated here. Indeed, this is how we have always known the Kali of Kalighat, simply as a head with four arms and the body only suggested by the red garment and garlands with no visible lower section. This is how she appears to the millions of visitors who flock to the temple for a glimpse (*darsan*) of the great goddess. The entrance to the sanctum is through a very small door with a tunnel-like passage which is probably a part of the older structure. The worshipper sees only the upper half of the image, and most people have no idea whether she has a body at all. A similar mystique also prevails in another famous Hindu temple of eastern India—the

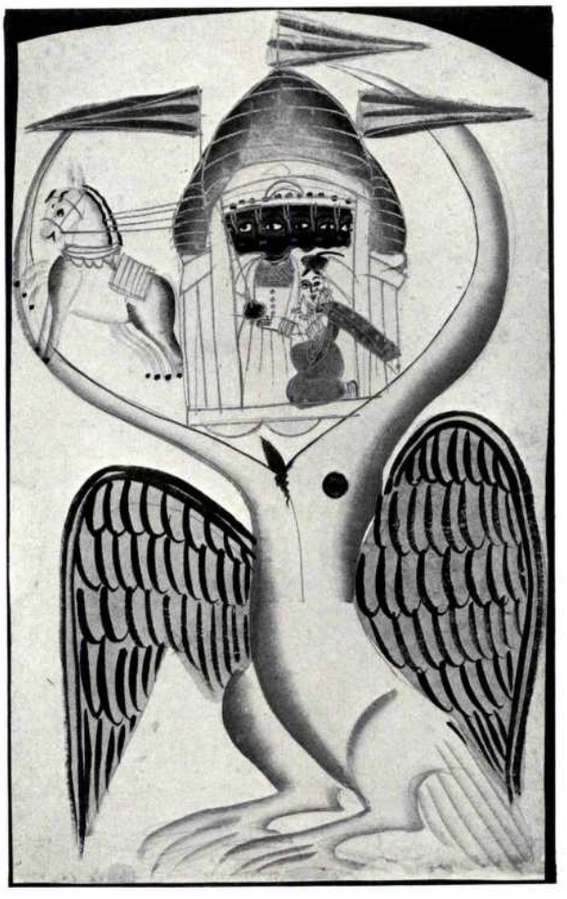
Fig. 6

8. Scenes from the life of Krishna, section from a handscroll. Birbhum, W. Bengal, early 19th century. Opaque water-colour on paper. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection.

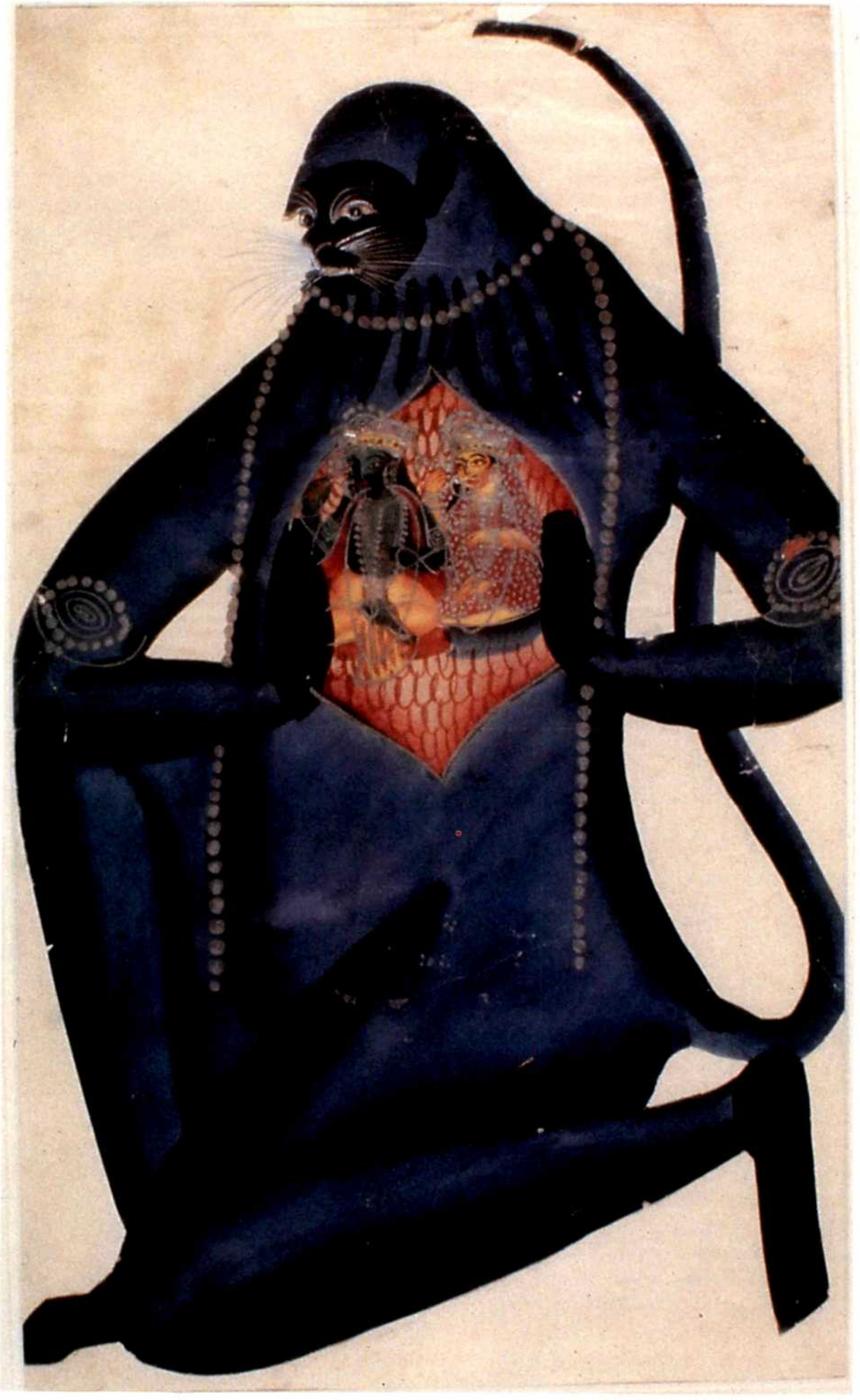
9. A seated gentleman in Bengali dress, section from a handscroll. Birbhum, W. Bengal, early 19th century. Opaque water-colour on paper. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection.

shrine of Jagannath at Puri. There too the images appear to be incomplete and without arms and legs. It has been claimed that the shrine at Puri was also originally Buddhist. The image at Kalighat is not complete, and the half-figure one sees is really a square-shaped block of undressed stone to which are attached a head of black basalt and four arms of gold. There are no legs and no prostrate Shiva at the feet of the goddess. This is not unusual, as a number of ancient shrines to the goddess have been established around a stone or a hidden spring. To cite only a few examples, Kali is worshipped in a numinous stone at Kamakhya in Assam, as well as in numerous temples in Nepal, the most important being Guhyakali and Dakshinkali in the Kathmandu valley and Mankamana in Gorkha, also Jwalamukhi in the Punjab, and Hinglaj in Pakistan. This form of aniconic symbol probably indicates a far greater antiquity for Calcutta's Kali than is generally supposed. *Fig. 7*

Both the popularity and the fame of the goddess are directly linked to the East India Company and the growth of the city. One of the principal reasons for the popularity of the shrine was the improvement in the city's road system. A wide road skirting the Maidan, and known as the "Road to Kalighat," was already in existence by 1742. Indeed, it was because of the city's growth that she had to move around during the first few decades before finally settling down at Kalighat. Several environmental and demographic changes—the selection of a site for the new fort, the clearance of the tiger-infested jungles for the Maidan and the expansion of settlements in the Bhawanipur and Alipore areas, made the shrine easily accessible to the ordinary pilgrim. The great



10. Ravana and Sita in Jatayu's beak. Kalighat, 1875-1900. Opaque water-colour on paper. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum Acquisitions Fund.



11. Hanuman showing Rama and Sita in his heart. Kalighat, 1875-1900. Opaque water-colour on paper. Chester and Davida Herwitz Family Collection.

famines of the 1770s, which wiped out almost three-quarters of the population must also have contributed towards increasing the goddess' fortunes. One can imagine how the survivors flocked to her shrine and plied her with offerings for sparing their lives. As one tries to imagine the devastation that visited the city in 1776, how appropriate seem Kipling's lines:

> And, above the packed and pestilential town,
> Death looked down.

By 1809, however, when the new temple was built, Kalighat was a busy and bustling shrine, not only for those who sought spiritual sustenance and solace but also for the tradespeople. This is not unusual at an Indian temple. As elsewhere in the world, commerce has always been the handmaiden of religion in India as well. Every major temple in India has its bazaar with rows of shopkeepers waiting to pounce upon the weary pilgrim. They sell all sorts of souvenirs and votive objects for the visitors to take back home. But rarely do such objects receive the kind of acclaim that has been showered upon the type of painting produced by a class of traditional artists at Kalighat.

When exactly the tradition began is not known, but very likely soon after the new temple complex was completed in 1809. Traditional artisans known as *patua* (painter) and *kumor* (potter) must already have settled at the temple site for at least a century to satisfy the religious requirements of the pilgrims. Although there are few *patuas* in the region today, there are several image-makers of the *kumor* class who cater to the seasonal needs of the population by supplying clay images for special religious festivals. By the early nineteenth century, however, Kalighat had become the most famous religious establishment not only in Calcutta but in the whole of Bengal. Around 1811 the Reverend William Ward commented that the Hindus from all over the world visited the temple at Kalighat. It was inevitable, therefore, that all sorts of tradesmen and artisans would flock to the temple to claim their share of the pilgrims' pocket-book.

Figs. 8, 9

The type of painting that the traditional *patuas* were used to rendering may best be gleaned from two sections of a handscroll illustrated here. These works depicting religious and mythological subjects were painted in long vertical scrolls that were used by the village bards to illustrate the stories they narrated. The type of painting introduced by the Kalighat *patuas* is significantly different from the traditional *patas*, both in size and technique. The pictures are of much smaller format, rarely exceeding forty-five centimetres in height. (The large picture of Kali illustrated as figure 3 is an exception, and must have been made at the specific request of a Christian missionary who displayed it while lecturing in Britain). In addition, they are painted on cheap paper rather than on cloth. They are executed very rapidly with bold brush strokes whereas the scroll paintings are carefully drawn with great attention to detail. The scroll paintings continue the ancient Indian mode of continuous narration with one composition telescoping into another, but the Kalighat picture usually presents only a single theme reduced to its essentials. Indeed, compared with the detailed and meticulous representation of the scroll paintings, Kalighat pictures can be characterized as both abstract and minimal. As Ajit Ghose, a noted Calcutta collector and critic and one of the earliest admirers of Kalighat painting wrote eloquently in 1926:

> There is an exquisite freshness and spontaneity of conception and execution in these old brush drawings... The drawing is made with one long sweep of the brush in which not the faintest suspicion of even a momentary indecision, not the slightest tremor, can be detected.

Although religious subjects remained a principal interest of the Kalighat painters, one notices a tremendous leap in imagination seldom encountered in the artistic tradition of India. It will not be possible to cite more than one or two examples. Both Hanuman, the great simian hero and Jatayu, the tragic avian hero of the epic *Ramayana* are familiar figures to students of Indian art. Rarely, have they been represented with such imaginative power as in the two Kalighat pictures illustrated here, which remain among the boldest conceptualizations of *Ramayana* themes in Indian art. In the first representation, the aged Jatayu is bravely trying to stop Ravana from abducting Sita. Again an unknown master has given us his personal interpretation of the struggle in a strikingly simple image. Rather than emphasizing Jatayu's ultimate failure, he has portrayed the bird as a hero of cosmic proportions. One is reminded of the destruction

Figs. 10, 11

2. A courtesan. Kalighat, 1875-1900. Opaque water-colour on aper. Edwin Binney 3rd Collection.

3. The dandy and the musk-rats' music party. Kalighat, 1875-1900. 'paque water-colour on paper. Edwin Binney 3rd Collection.

14. A courtesan humiliating her lover. Kalighat, 1875-1900. Opaque water-colour on paper. Chester and Davida Herwitz Family Collection.

of Bakasura (the crane demon) by the child Krishna. It is well known how devoted Hanuman was to Rama; the charmingly simple and sensitive configuration of the second illustration shows the incident in the *Ramayana* where the larger than life Hanuman reveals the occupants of his heart. One wonders whether the artist has borrowed the basic idea from the "Sacred Heart" pictures of Christ.

While much traditional art is timeless, the Kalighat pictures are both time-and-space-bound in the sense that they reflect the time and place in which they were created. They are quintessentially Bengali in appearance and are remarkably graphic in representing the nineteenth-century Bengali society of Calcutta. Indeed, much of the art produced in Calcutta by both British and Indian artists beginning around 1775 and continuing through the nineteenth century either depicts Europeans and European life in the city or are pictures of ethnographical interest. It was left to the humble and anonymous artists of Kalighat to provide us with lively pictures reflecting the social realities and mores of the time. With their trenchant wit and humour, the Kalighat artists were the first true caricaturists and satirical artists of India. They achieved with the brush what Iswar Gupta and others had done with the pen. Theirs are the visual counterparts of the stinging satirical genre that continuously exposed the hypocrisy of the "bourgeois gentilhomme" of nineteenth-century Calcutta. It will not be possible to dwell at length on the subject here, but a few examples must be given to demonstrate both the originality and the wit of the Kalighat artists.

The Kalighat artists appear to have been particularly concerned with the sexual peccadilloes of the Bengali dandy. In nineteenth-century Calcutta, if a gentleman stayed at home in the evening instead of visiting his mistress, generally a prostitute, he was
Fig. 12 considered to have become very ill. While stylized pictures of these ladies of ill-repute in a variety of poses became so common that they may well be considered to have served the same purpose as today's "pin-up" pictures more to the point, were such
Figs. 13, 14 representations as a lady placing her foot on her lover's face or "The dandy and the musk-rats' music party." The former image was clearly meant to demonstrate the tremendous hold the courtesan had on the so-called educated and cultured gentleman of Calcutta. It may be considered to be a modern version of the more classical image where Krishna is shown massaging Radha's feet. One cannot also ignore the possible influence of the image of Kali on the iconography of this composition. The second picture illustrates a Bengali proverb: *gharete chhunchor kettan bahire konchar pattan* (At home the musk-rats sing; outside the dandy parades the pleats of his dhoti). The allusion clearly is to the financial ruin of the gentleman because of his excessive indulgence in the company of the ladies of the night.

Another favourite target of the Kalighat artists was the hypocritical Vaishnava mendicant. Although outwardly they displayed their ascetic nature with caste marks on their foreheads and were constantly counting their beads, in point of fact many were not averse to sexually assaulting unsuspecting women who would invite them in for food or
Fig. 15 alms. From one such picture of a hypocritical Vaishnava taking by surprise a woman who tries to pull him away by his hair, it is clear that the Kalighat artists were not meek in their graphic exposition of such antisocial behaviour. Such satirical subjects make it clear that by the mid-nineteenth century the Kalighat pictures were not only confined to the illiterate pilgrims. The people who enjoyed reading the poetry of Iswar Chandra Gupta, Dinabandhu Mitra, Bharat Chandra Roy and others were obviously the customers for such satirical pictures as well.

15. A lady and a hypocritical Vaishnava. Kalighat, 1875-1900. Opaque water-colour on paper. Private Collection.

16. A *buraq* representing the Muslim festival of Muharram, Kalighat, 1875-1900. Chester and Davida Herwitz Family Collection.

17. A goddess with a violin. Kalighat, *c.* 1900. Opaque water-colour on paper. Chester and Davida Herwitz Family Collection.

Kalighat pictures also found enthusiastic collectors among the Europeans, and not simply as illustrations of Hindu customs and manners. No doubt, at first, this was one of the reasons for collecting them in large albums to be taken back to England. These albums included a wide variety of pictures notable not only for their subjects but also for their styles. The Herwitz pictures published here were probably collected by an Englishman around 1900 or even in the early part of the century. Besides the traditional Hindu religious subjects now familiar through various publications, it *Fig. 16* includes some that are clearly Muslim such as the *buraq* illustrated here. It also includes pictures rendered in notably different expressions of the same style, which clearly indicate that although we do not have the names of the artists, some definitely painted in distinctive individual modes. There can be little doubt that the painting of a *Fig. 17* goddess carrying a violin, is a modern version of Sarasvati, the patron deity of music. With its foliage and sky, its style differs from that of the other paintings illustrated here.

By the end of the nineteenth century, some Europeans had begun to appreciate Kalighat pictures for their aesthetic merit. Among the early European collectors and admirers were Egron Lundgren, J. Lockwood Kipling, Monier-Williams, and E. B. Havell. Except for Monier-Williams all were artists. Lundgren had come to India in 1858 to report on the mutiny, and while in Calcutta not only did he visit the temple but also bought a number of Kalighat pictures whose complex iconography perplexed him, but which he admired nonetheless. It is very likely that his contemporary, William Simpson also acquired some Kalighat pictures.

Partly due to the influence of Havell and partly because of their search for an appropriate Indian artistic mode, Kalighat paintings were also acquired and admired by Abanindranath Tagore and other students of the Calcutta School of Art, towards the end of the nineteenth century. It is now well known that at least one eminent modern Indian artist, Jamini Roy, was profoundly influenced by the traditional paintings of Bengal including Kalighat pictures. The possible influence of Kalighat paintings upon some of the early twentieth-century European masters has only been timidly suggested so far, although as far back as 1925, Ajit Ghose made the bold assertion that they did "anticipate by a century or more cubism and impressionism." Such a claim is far-fetched, and while Kalighat pictures had nothing to do with either impressionism or cubism, they may have had some impact on the works of such artists as Leger, Matisse, Jawlensky and others. Indeed, although Kalighat paintings have not been entirely ignored by scholars and critics, a more comprehensive study of the subject is still a desideratum.

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Indian Artists and British Patrons in Calcutta

Pratapaditya Pal

> [The Indian artist] has an instinctive appreciation of colour, and, though without any knowledge of the principles which should regulate its use, is often more happy in his combinations than the educated workman of Europe. His colour is often exaggerated but is always warm, and rich and fearless. The native artist is also patient: for weeks and months he will work at his design, painfully elaborating the most minute details; no time is considered too long, no labour too intense to secure perfection in imitation or delicacy in execution.
>
> Baden Powell

Much has been written about the European artists and Calcutta, but the story of the city's role as a magnet for traditional Indian artists is not well documented. Both the European and native artists were drawn to Calcutta almost simultaneously, during the time when the city began to grow rapidly and assume its present shape. This was under the governor-generalship of Warren Hastings, who should be regarded as the true founder of Calcutta. It was during his stewardship that (in the words of Thomas and William Daniell) "the bamboo roof suddenly vanished; the marble column took the place of brick walls," and, we might add, the urban character and cultural personality of Calcutta began to evolve. Along with other manifestations of urban culture, the visual arts became a necessity of life, and both the city and its residents had the economic means to indulge their aesthetic tastes.

From both literary and artistic evidence, it would appear that the earliest patrons of the arts in Calcutta were the British, who generally preferred to decorate their mansions with the works of visiting European artists. These included oil-paintings, water-colours, and miniatures, as well as drawings and lithographs. However, not everyone could afford to buy originals from European artists, and there were others who wanted pictures of Indian scenes and natives either to satisfy their own curiosity or to return home with them to show off the exotic land with its strange people and quaint customs to their families and friends. The enthusiasm and determination of such collectors is evident from the following observations in the journals kept by Lady Nugent between 1811 and 1815:

> I intend to get drawings of everything... I mean to begin a collection of curiosities of all sorts, drawings, etc. for my dear children.

Just as the modern traveller takes countless photographs to relive the journey later with friends and family in a predictable slide show.

Some patrons, however, were serious collectors. Among them were Lady Impey, the wife of Sir Elijah Impey (the first chief justice of the Supreme Court at Calcutta),

Lord Wellesley (the builder of the present Rajbhavan in Calcutta), Mrs Edward Wheeler, Nathaniel Middleton (of Middleton Street), Lady Nichols, and several others. They retained or commissioned Indian artists to accurately record the flora and fauna, the architecture, as well as the manners and customs of the country. A great many such works have survived and are avidly sought after by collectors today.

Apart from painting for such individual patrons, Indian artists were also employed by the East India Company to serve as draughtsmen for engineers. Still others worked with official surveys and missions. For instance, Vishnu Prasad, who worked for William Roxburg of the Sibpur Botanical Gardens, accompanied his employer on his explorations in Nepal and elsewhere. Another Calcutta painter (originally from Patna), Manu Lal, worked first for Wellesley and then went to Sumatra in 1807 with Richard Parry of the Bengal Civil Service. One of his signed pictures is a dignified and sensitive portrait of a
Fig. 1 richly tattooed inhabitant of the Poggy Islands, Sumatra, carrying his bow and arrows. Noteworthy is Manu Lal's complete mastery of European techniques—of frontal shading to suggest volume, as well as delineating the ground with impressionistic light washes to effectively contrast with the exquisite precision of the tattooed designs. Indeed, one sees here a felicitous blending of Indian and European techniques. Artists such as Manu Lal were also needed by some of the commercial houses, particularly those engaged in the conveyance building business. The firm of Stewart & Company was one such that, beginning in 1783, employed Indian artists "to assist British craftsmen in painting and decorating not only carriages, palanquins and sedan chairs but ceremonial elephant housings."

There is no doubt that a whole new world opened up for the Indian artists. They now learned how to prepare maps and architectural drawings involving the correct use of perspective. When they were sent on special missions as draughtsmen, apart from scientific drawings, they also had to paint the local people as well as their costumes and crafts. That many of the artists more than satisfied their employers, despite the latter's initial reservations, is clear from some of the comments that have come down to us. The tenor of such comments is that the Indian artists were incapable of painting landscapes and slow to grasp the technique involved in perspective (none of which is true) but were otherwise extremely good at what they did. "The merit of their drawing is almost confined to a very accurate imitation of flowers and birds," wrote Thomas Twining, a Bengal civilian. In the same vein, Michael Symes, who had taken a Bengali artist to Burma, complimented his employee's precision and acute powers of observation. He found his assistant's pictures of costumes "as faithful as the pencil can delineate" and observed how the Indian artists generally "draw figures and trace every line of a picture, with a laborious exactness peculiar to themselves."

And well they would have, for most artists who flocked to the Europeans for patronage were generally trained in the Mughal style. They inherited a centuries-old tradition that laid particular emphasis on the detailed drawing of costumes and jewellery and of fauna and flora. No matter how demanding the British were, these artists could not but draw a bird or a flower beautifully and with admirable precision. And we must not forget that even the great Rembrandt collected and studied Mughal painting precisely because he admired the extraordinary finesse with which the Mughal masters had painted detail in imperial portraits. By the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Mughal patronage, whether at Delhi, Agra, or at such provincial centres as Patna and Murshidabad, was virtually non-existent. And since Calcutta was

the new centre of commerce and political power, it was inevitable that artists from Patna, Murshidabad and neighbouring towns such as Bankura, Hooghly, and Midnapore should flock to Job Charnock's city to seek their fortune, exactly as did their fellow artists from as far-off as England.

One of the first patrons of Indian artists in Calcutta was Lady Impey. Both she and her husband were deeply interested in natural history, and they had a series of birds and animals painted, of which at least sixty examples have survived. In most of the pictures, inscriptions both in English and Persian identify the subject as well as provide a date, the name of the artist, and the collector. Typically, after identifying the subject (both fauna and flora), the inscription states, "The collection of Lady Impey in Calcutta" and "painted by so and so, Native of Patna," followed sometimes by the date. The surviving examples are dated from 1774 to 1782 and are signed by one of three artists: Shaikh Zain-al-Din, Bhawani Das, and Ram Das. Unfortunately nothing is known *Fig. 2* about them except that all three were from Patna. Nor is it known whether they were already in Calcutta when hired by the Impeys or brought from Patna; the latter is more likely. It is possible that the two Dases were related and it is interesting that a shaikh was a painter. In any case, it is clear from their work that all three

1. A native of the Poggy Islands, Sumatra. Water-colour by Manu Lal. *c.* 1810. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

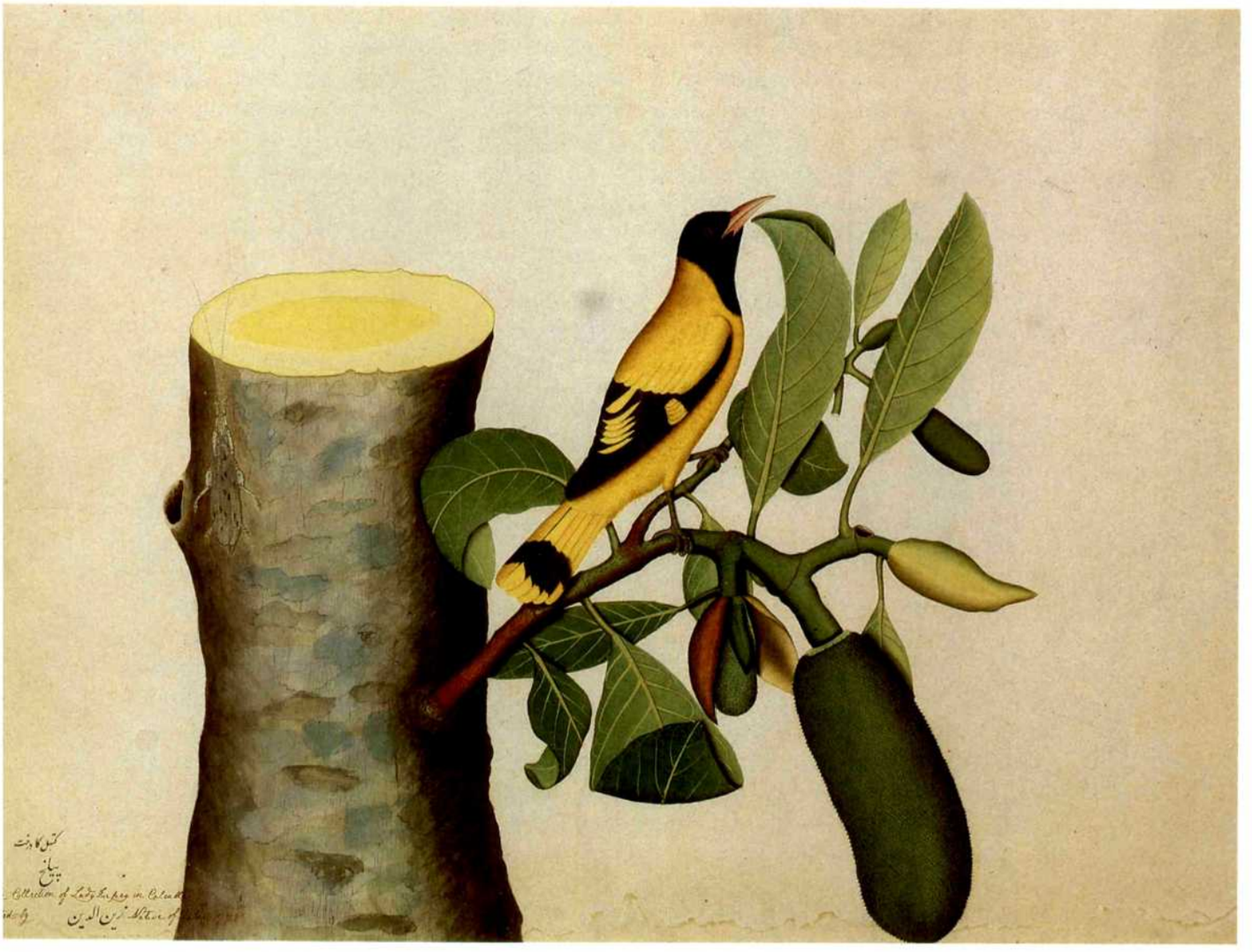
were very talented and may already have been familiar with European works and methods before being retained by the Impeys. Not only do the pictures reveal a complete mastery of European techniques, but both the colouring and drawing are so precise and assured that one must assume that all three were well-trained in painting such subjects.

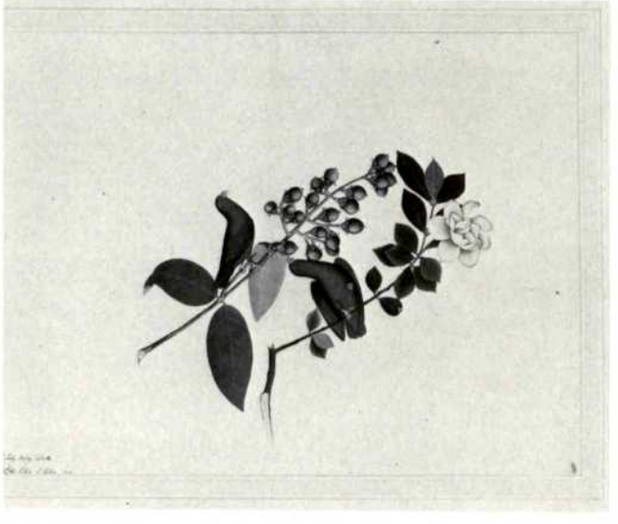
The Impey collection of pictures of birds and animals are admirable precisely because they combine well, both feeling and observation. Even as every detail, whether of the plants or of the animals or birds, is rendered with microscopic precision, there is, at the same time, a liveliness and spontaneity in the representations, that clearly reveals the
Fig. 3 artists' empathy with their subjects. It appears as if each bird or animal was the artist's pet, and the creature's "personality" often seems to come through in the depiction. The compositions vary with the subjects as well as the artist involved. Sometimes they reveal a playful, ornamental design in which the botanical specimens, although accurately drawn, almost overwhelm the birds; in others, a single animal or bird occupies much of the starkly white surface of the English paper, presenting a bold dramatic effect. The colouring is always rich, the pigments having been applied in layers, thereby creating the varied textures of the branches and fruits, the feathers and furs, with remarkable accuracy and finesse. It will not be possible to discuss the works of these three artists at greater length here given the limitations of space, but it is hoped that some art historian will soon prepare a monograph on the natural history pictures commissioned by Lady Impey. Some of these works, according to Stuart Cary Welch, have been rendered "in the manner of Dutch still-life pictures," while others,
Fig. 4 such as the perceptive painting of the flying fox, evoke the flavour of Gothic horror tales. Such compliments are indeed well deserved by the three artists, who toiled away for Impey memsahib, with probably little to show for their labours.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Calcutta had become a boom town for native artists who found work with numerous individuals as well as institutions. One such institution was the Botanical Gardens in Sibpur across the river from the city. Before the gardens were taken over officially, they were the grounds of the private home of Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Kyd (of Kyd Street in Calcutta), a professional engineer and amateur botanist. Upon Kyd's death in 1793, William Roxburg was brought from Madras to be the first director of the gardens. Roxburg was keenly interested in botanical pictures even while in Madras, and continued the tradition in Calcutta. When he retired in 1813 his botanical pictures—painted both in Madras and Calcutta—numbered over two-and-a-half thousand. Known as the *Roxburg Icons*, the originals are kept in thirty-four bound volumes, at the Sibpur Gardens. It is not known whether he brought any of his southern artists with him to Calcutta, but we do know the names of two local artists employed by him. Among the skilled botanical draughtsmen he employed, were Vishnu Prasad and Gorachaud (Gorachand). Vishnu Prasad may well have been from up-country, perhaps Patna, but Gorachand is a popular Bengali name. Judging by their works, there can be little doubt of their technical skill and their aesthetic sensibility. These paintings are not simply "accurate drawings of the appearance and structure" of the plants, but poetic evocations, in form and colour, of the marvels of nature.

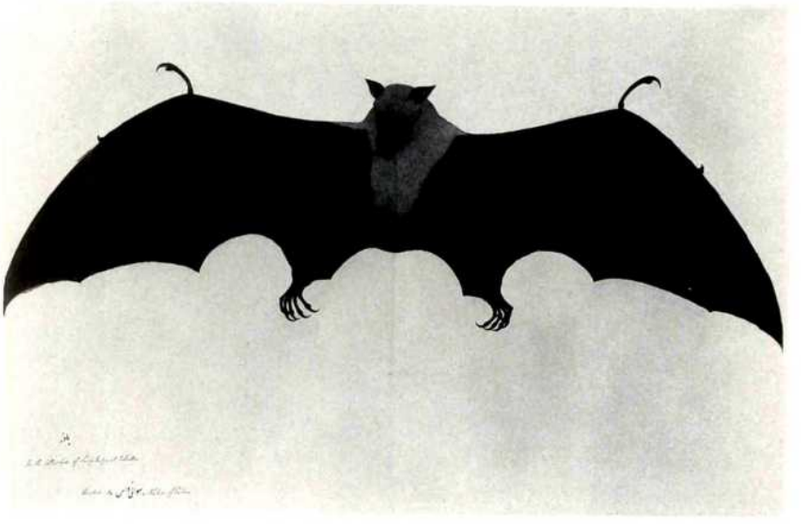
Although the original Roxburg drawings are in Sibpur, copies were made for the company as well as for several eminent personages, including the Marquis of Wellesley, who is better known for building the magnificent Rajbhavan in the city. He is also well

2. A bird on a branch of a jack-fruit tree. Water-colour by Shaikh Zain-al-Din. Calcutta, dated 1778. Paul F. Walter Collection. Photo: Jim Strong Inc., New York.





A pair of lorikeets on broken branches. Water-colour by aikh Zain-al-Din. Calcutta, dated 1780. Los Angeles unty Museum of Art, Purchased with funds provided by ristian Humann.



4. A flying fox. Water-colour by Bhawani Das. Calcutta, *c.* 1780. Private Collection. Photo: The Harvard University Art Museums.

known for his interest in both fauna and flora. The governor-general's country house, up the river in Barrackpur, quickly became famous for its gardens and menagerie. Just how busy the Calcutta artists must have been at this time, is evident from the fact that Wellesley's pictures of plants, birds, animals, insects, and fishes constitute twenty-seven volumes that are now in the India Office Library. No less fascinating, is yet another bound volume of Wellesley's collection comprising one hundred and thirty-eight topographical and ethnographical drawings also done by Calcutta artists. At least one of the artists who worked for Wellesley is known—Manu Lal of Patna, whose work has already been discussed.

Apart from the spectacular botanical study of the *Nymphaea lotus* L. var. *rubra* Roxb., *Fig. 5* or the common variety of the red lotus, probably rendered by either Vishnu Prasad or Gorachand, three more pictures from the Wellesley collection are illustrated here. One *Fig. 6* of these is a lively representation of a porcupine, no doubt an accurate portrait of a specimen in the Barrackpur menagerie. One wonders if Manu Lal, who is known to have painted some animals for Wellesley, was responsible for this study. Noteworthy is the rather curious treatment of the animal's tail, as if it were a lighted sparkler.

Figs. 7, 8 The other two pictures are competent renderings of what is generally characterized as "picturesque" painting, much in vogue in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century British society, whether in Britain or in India. These pictures belie the accusation that Indian artists were incapable of drawing landscapes.

It has already been mentioned that many of the artists, particularly those who came from Patna, Murshidabad or even Oudh, Agra or Delhi, must have been trained largely in the Mughal tradition. As they sought British patronage, they quickly adopted European techniques, either while they were working as draughtsmen for the surveys, or by becoming directly associated with European artists, or by copying their works. The Oudh artists were particularly adept at copying pictures by eminent British artists such as Tilly Kettle, while the most influential figures in Calcutta appear to have been William Hodges and the Dutch artist Baltazard Solvyns (see "A Portrait of Black Town" in this volume).

Aquatints of Hodges' Indian landscapes had begun to be issued in London in 1785, and, three years later, Thomas Daniell was commenting that "the commonest bazaar [in Calcutta] is full of prints—and Hodges' *Indian Views* are selling off by cart loads." How well the Calcutta artists learned the technique of executing landscapes in water-colour and how profound the influence of Hodges was, can be gleaned from a free rendering of plate 11 of his *Select Views* showing the ruins of Fatehpur-Sikri (see figure 8). Even though derivative, the work has a pictorial coherency and charm that is no less appealing than that of the original. We do not know the source of the Palladian mansion (figure 7), nor can the building be identified, but there can be little doubt that the drawing "incorporates idioms peculiar to Hodges," as noted by Mildred Archer.

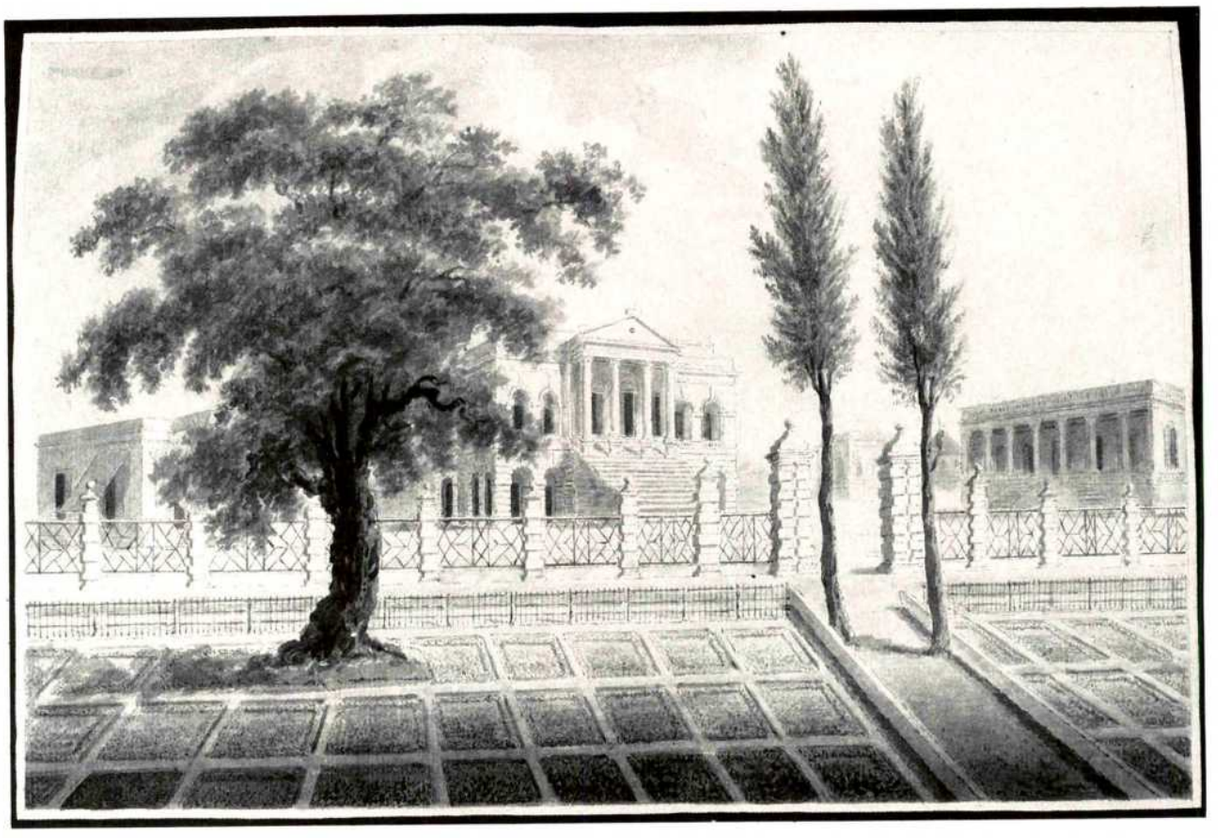
In the case of Hodges, the Calcutta artists only had his aquatints to work from, but with Solvyns, some had a more direct association. Apart from studying his prints, several artists were employed by Solvyns to assist him in printing and colouring the plates. Solvyns' monumental *A Collection of 250 Coloured Etchings* was published in 1796 and as Mildred Archer has succinctly summed up:

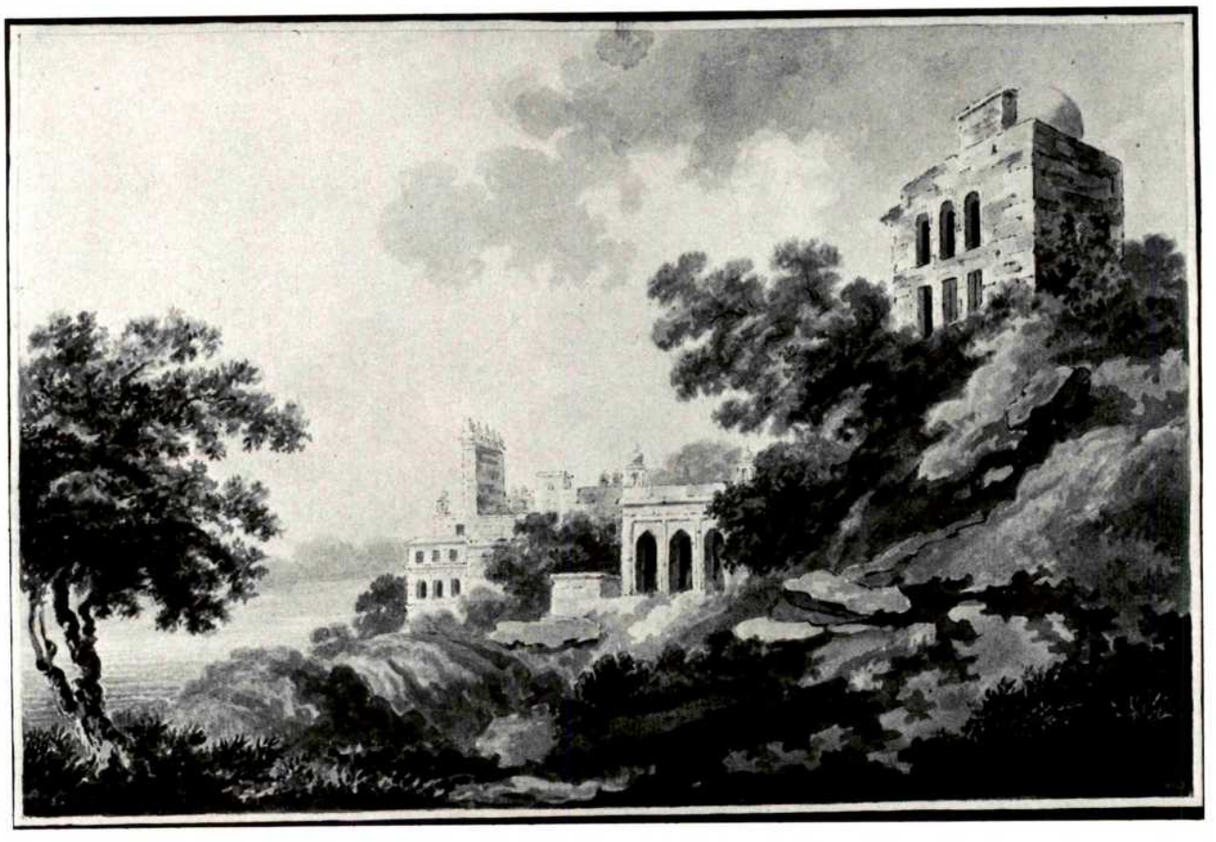
> Here in fact were the very subjects which, as Indian artists had already come to realize, appealed to Europeans. The book must have confirmed their stylistic guidance. Solvyns' etchings are marked by tall elongated figures with an air of

5. The red lotus. Water-colour by a Calcutta artist. *c.* 1798-1804. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London, The Marquis of Wellesley Collection.

6. A porcupine. Water-colour by a Calcutta artist. *c.* 1798-1804. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London, The Marquis of Wellesley Collection.

7. A Palladian mansion with a formal garden. Water-colour by a Calcutta artist. *c.* 1798-1804. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London, The Marquis of Wellesley Collection.



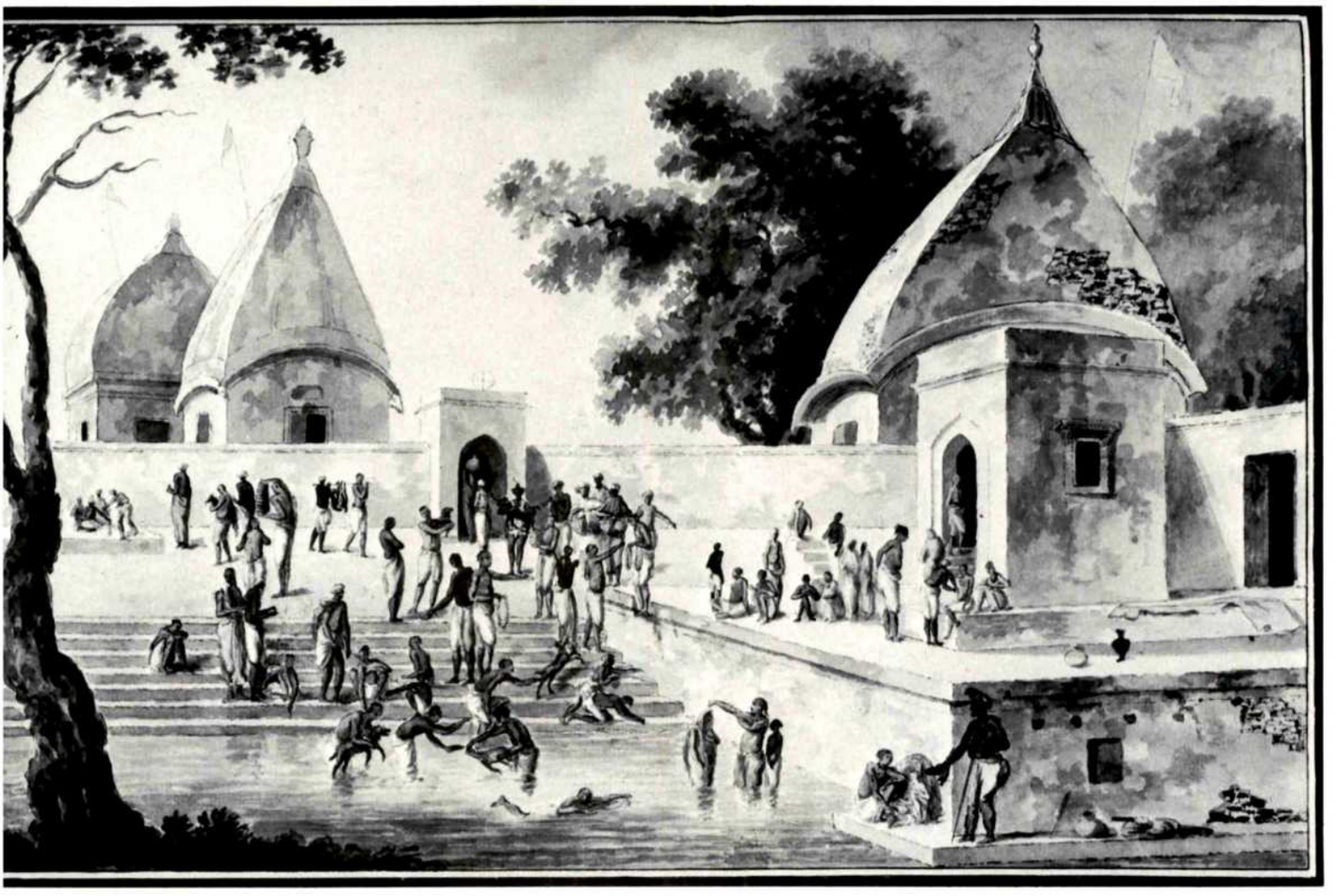


8. A distant view of Fatehpur-Sikri. Water-colour by a Calcutta artist. *c.* 1798-1804. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London, The Marquis of Wellesley Collection.

sad melancholy, executed in tones of grey and brown sepia, the whole surrounded by a heavy black border, and it is these qualities which appear in sets by Calcutta painters.

Nowhere is Solvyns' influence more vividly perceptible than in the works of an unknown Calcutta artist, probably from Murshidabad, dated by Archer between 1798 and 1804. The water-colour is inscribed *The worship of the Hindoo Goddess Bhawannie Tytoghur near Barrackpoor.* In this instance, however, the artist was not copying a print. While his elongated figures, his sombre tones, and colouring may reflect the awareness of Solvyns' style, the spontaneity of the picture indicates that the artist may have worked from a sketch made on the spot. Anonymous though he may be, there can be no doubt over the artist's mastery of European techniques. It is interesting to compare such spontaneous works by unknown, traditional artists with those of the gentlemen artists of the Bengal School a century later, grappling with the problems of European "realism." *Fig. 9*

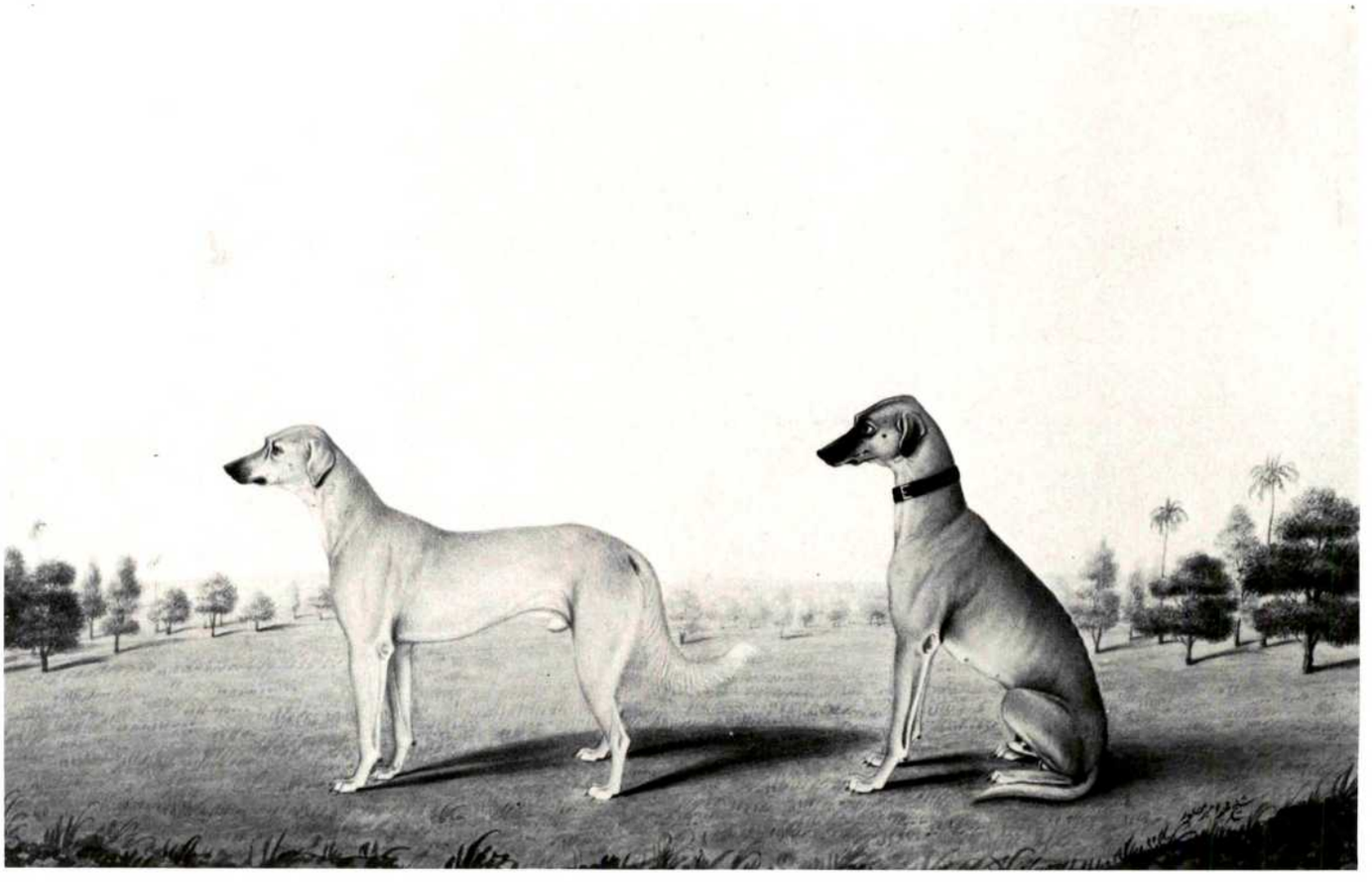
If Shaikh Zain-al-Din of Patna was the finest eighteenth-century artist working for the British, then in the nineteenth century another artist, Shaikh Muhammad Amir of Karraya, was "the most gifted and prolific of a number of artists who specialized in working for the British residents of Calcutta." Once again we know nothing about him except that he was a resident of Karraya, a suburb of Calcutta. Very likely, however, he was a hereditary artist whose parents may have moved from up-country, perhaps



9. *The worship of the Hindoo Goddess Bhawannie Tytoghur near Barrackpoor.* Water-colour by a Calcutta artist. *c.* 1798-1804. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London, The Marquis of Wellesley Collection.

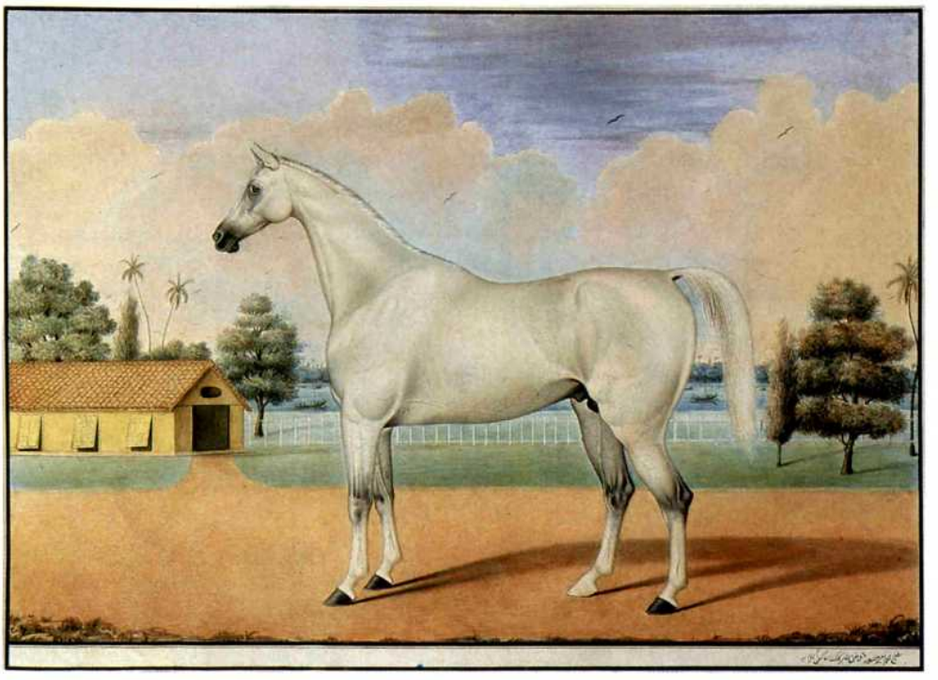
10. A *hookaburdar*. Water-colour by Shaikh Muhammad Amir of Karraya. Calcutta, 1840-50. The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

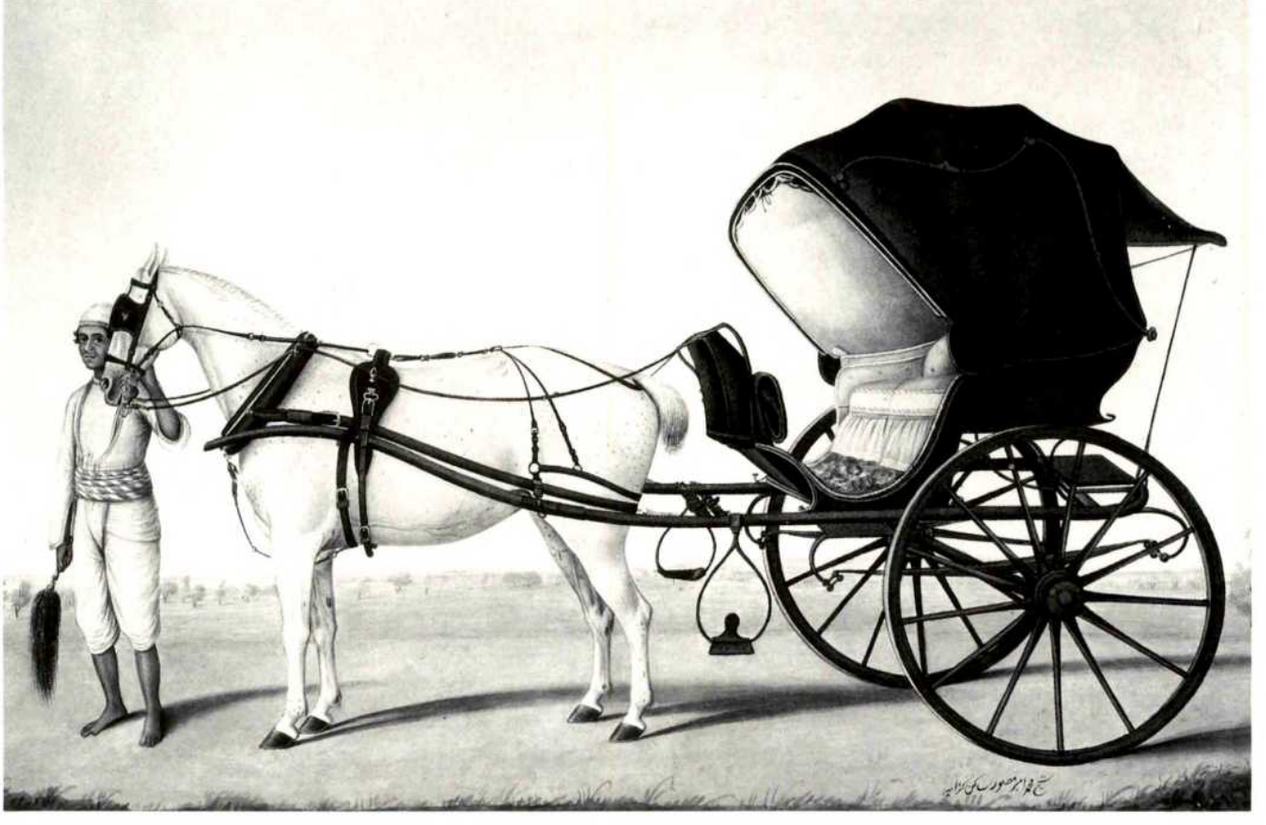
11. A Bengali brahman. Water-colour by Shaikh Muhammad Amir of Karraya. Calcutta, *c.* 1846. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.



12. Two hounds in a landscape. Water-colour by Shaikh Muhammad Amir of Karraya. Calcutta, *c.* 1845. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London. Photo: Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

13. A portrait of a white stallion. Water-colour by Shaikh Muhammad Amir of Karraya. Calcutta, *c.* 1845. Courtesy Sotheby's, Ex-Collection The Elliot Family, Great Britain.





14. A groom leading a grey horse harnessed to a carriage. Water-colour by Shaikh Muhammad Amir of Karraya. Calcutta, 1840-45. The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Murshidabad or even Patna. Muhammad Amir was probably born in Karraya, for he always introduced himself as a native of that place. He may well have been related to Shaikh Zain-al-Din, who may have settled in Karraya. Amir seems to have valued his independence, for he moved about a good deal in the city in search of individual commissions. One of his patrons was a businessman named Thomas Holroyd who lived at No. 5 Park Street in the 1830s. Most surviving works of Muhammad Amir date from the mid-thirties, when he worked for Holroyd, until the mid-forties, judging by the watermarks on the paper. A contemporary admirer of his, if not a patron, was Fanny Parks, who copied several of Muhammad Amir's paintings for her lithographed illustrations to the book *Wanderings of a Pilgrim in Search of the Picturesque,* published in 1850.

Muhammad Amir of Karraya was a versatile artist who was equally at home with human figures, animals, and landscapes. He painted anything and everything that his patrons desired with equal aplomb. He would paint their houses and carriages, their children and servants, as well as the stock themes of crafts, customs, and professions. But unlike most other such works, which are generally nondescript, Muhammad Amir's pictures are clearly distinguished by their technical superiority as well as their polished elegance. Every representation of a human being, whether it be of a *hookaburdar* or a Bengali brahman, is the result of acute observation. These are not depictions of mere types, but individual portraits of real persons whom he used as models. His study of two hounds in a landscape is certainly one of the finest surviving animal paintings from British India. The picture shows not only his technical virtuosity, but also a complete understanding of the nature of the animals, who are clearly curious about something going on in the distance. No less admirable are his paintings of horses, with or without carriages. A number of his horse pictures have survived, and clearly demonstrate his confident mastery in drawing this animal, a mastery that even many of his great Mughal forbears did not always achieve. Indeed, to refer to Muhammad Amir as the Stubbs of Calcutta would have flattered that eminent British painter of horses. Although Muhammad Amir was probably not required to paint any landscapes, except mansions with gardens for his patrons, it is clear from two of the pictures illustrated here (see figures 11, 12) that he was quite at home in this peculiarly European genre. The pictures also reveal his keen understanding of the rudiments of pictorial composition and a skilful use of naturalistic settings. The riverscape behind the brahman (in figure 11), representing the holy Ganges, adds to the personality of his subject, while the open fields behind the dogs (figure 12) suggest the eagerness of the animals to enjoy the outdoors and their owner's affluence.

Figs. 10, 11

Fig. 12

Figs. 13, 14

Another Calcutta artist who was a contemporary of Muhammad Amir of Karraya was E. C. Das (his name is spelt as Doss in the picture illustrated here). Once again nothing is known about this artist but, judging from the name, he was very likely a Bengali. Several other artists of the period with the Das surname are known—many of them specialists in woodcut and lithography. E. C. Das himself had no difficulty in learning the European methods of painting. Although not quite as lyrical and refined as Muhammad Amir, Das' picture of a language teacher or *munshi* with his stick, shows the increasing naturalism evident in the works of the Indian artists of this period. The brushwork is delicate and the colouring gay but subtle. Generally, such pictures when painted by an Amir or a Das, show a spontaneity and liveliness not always evident in most representations of such themes of ethnographical interest.

Fig. 15

Until photography became popular in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, drawings and water-colours by Indian artists continued to supply the visual documentation of the land, its peoples, occupations, and religious customs for the sahibs to take back home. Much of this material is rather pedestrian and even though drawn or painted individually, has the characteristics of mass-scale mechanical productions. Others, however, especially when painted by gifted artists such as Muhammad Amir, Sewak Ram of Patna or the master artist of the Frazer album, become sources of aesthetic pleasure rather than merely adequate ethnographical documentation. Two examples of such pictures will suffice to demonstrate the difference between the work of a talented artist and that by a common bazaar artist.

15. A *munshi* or teacher. Water-colour by E. C. Doss. Calcutta, *c.* 1846. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

Fig. 16 The earlier of the two pictures represents, as the inscription tells us, an offering to the Ganges. The artist was very likely trained in Murshidabad, as has been suggested by Mildred Archer, from where he must have migrated in around 1800 to Calcutta to paint this and other pictures of the series for an unknown British patron. The picture is attractive as much for its rich details, especially of the exquisitely crafted peacock boat, as for its brilliant colouring. Even as one admires the artist's skill in rendering the decorative minutiae of the boat, one regrets that such exquisitely carved boats should have been lost in the river. Clearly, this unknown master painter preferred the passionately intense colouring of the Indian aesthetic tradition to the more sombre hues of European works.

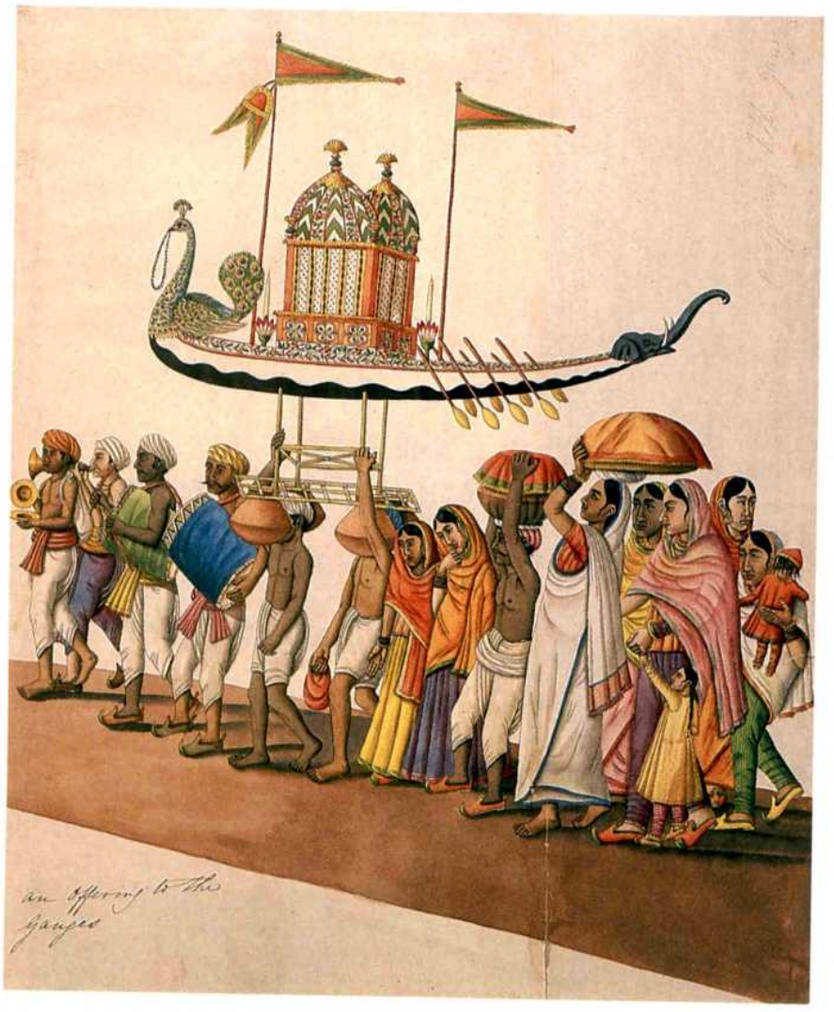
Fig. 17 The second picture, on the other hand, has neither the finesse nor the vitality of the earlier work. It is a typical ethnographical picture rendered for a less discerning and possibly less affluent patron, and was perhaps interesting to its acquirer for the novelty of its support and the subject. It is painted on mica, which was a popular vehicle for ethnographical pictures in the nineteenth century. The subject is a religious procession with an image of Kali being taken to the river for immersion after worship. Such pictures continued to be painted in large numbers until the political climate changed dramatically after the unfortunate events of 1857, and the British zeal for Indian pictures cooled considerably.

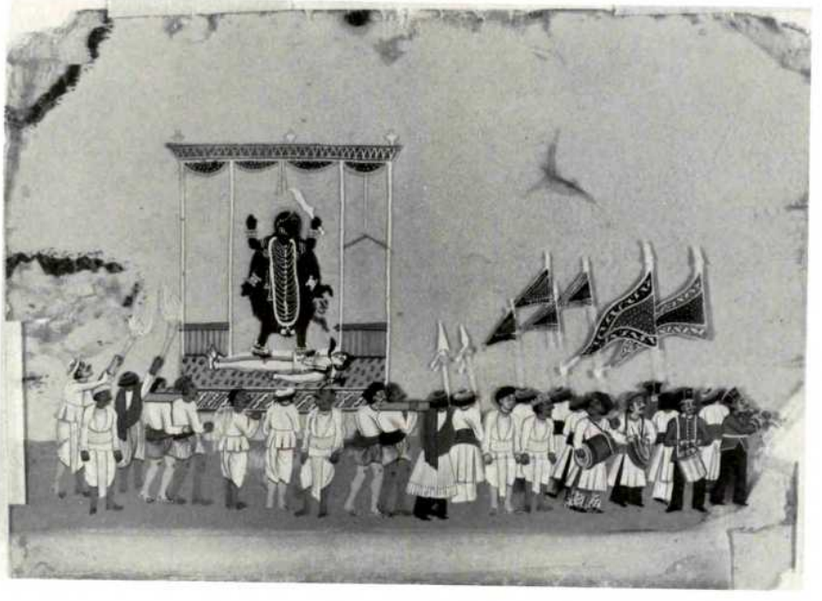
One of the most original, curious, and amazing artistic documents from British Calcutta, is an album of water-colours and gouache done for a Mr Adams. The watermark on the paper provides an upper limit of 1826, at which time there were several Adamses in Calcutta. A certain George Adams of the Bengal Civil Service seems to be the most likely candidate. In any event, the pictures were painted both in Calcutta and in Burma, where Mr Adams seems have served for a while. Whether he took his artist with him in an official capacity or for personal reasons, is not known. It was quite common for officers and civil servants to take artists with them on tours, both for official and personal purposes. Nor do we know anything about the artist except that he was a Bengali and knew no English.

The volume is enormous, consisting of four hundred and seventeen folios, each with a picture. However, nothing in it is conventional either in the subject-matter or in the mode of representation. There is a touch of irreverence and sarcastic humour in everything the artist painted. His thematic repertoire is large and varied, giving us tantalizing glimpses of life both in British and Indian society in Calcutta, a theme no other artist has recorded in such an observant and amusing manner. His style too, is quite unusual and idiosyncratic, and defies classification under the general modes prevalent among Company School artists of the time. One wonders if he had had access to the English satirical prints that must have been familiar at the time in Calcutta. His work is naive and spontaneous and completely unselfconscious. He must have been fortunate to have so understanding a patron who probably had an equally wry sense of humour. It will not be possible to illustrate more than a couple of pictures by this unknown Calcutta master, but like Muhammad Amir of Karraya, he too deserves a monograph.

Fig. 18 One of the two pictures from the Adams album illustrated here, depicts a scene in a traditional school known as a *pathsala.* The inscription describes it as a "Hindoo school in Calcutta." Apart from being a unique representation of this subject, it is a highly accurate one, capturing the essence of such a school. The teacher is a pundit and

16. An offering to the Ganges. Water-colour by a Calcutta artist. *c.* 1798-1804. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.





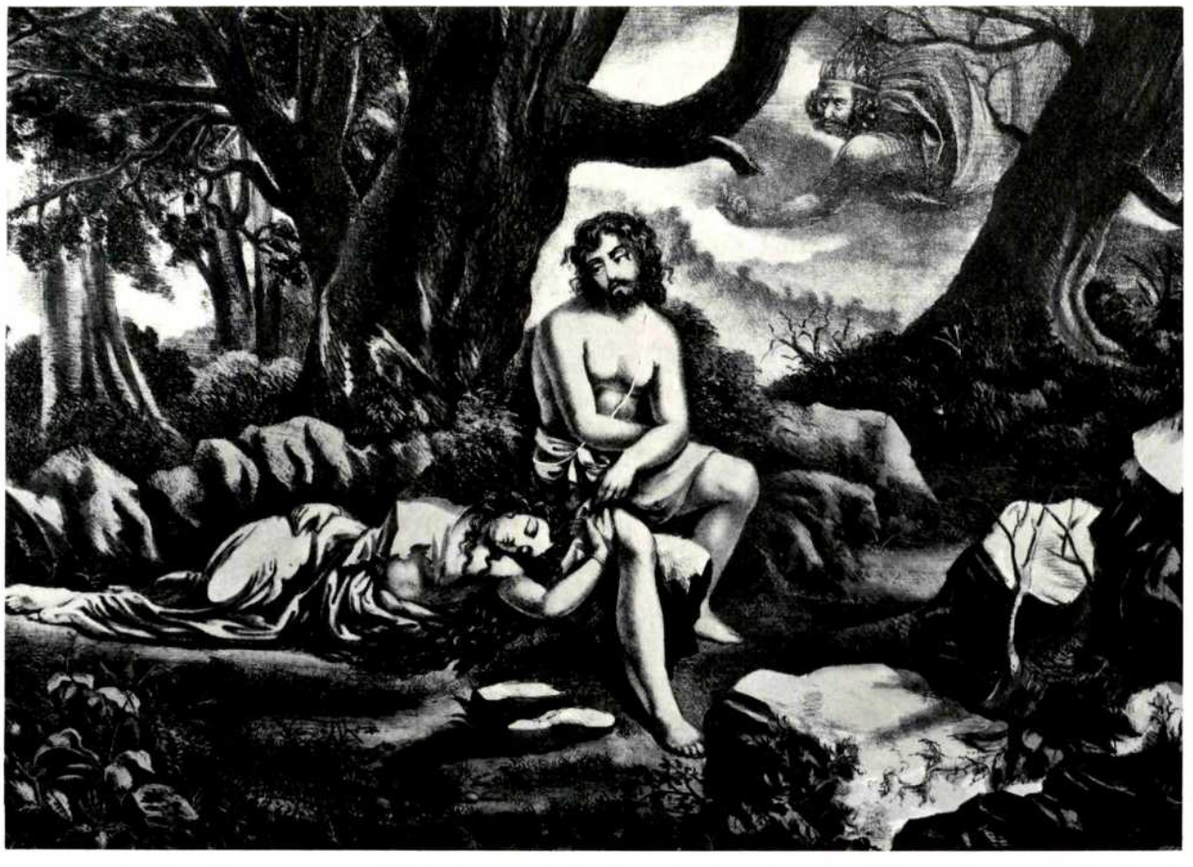
17. A procession with an image of Kali. Opaque water-colour on mica, by a Calcutta artist. *c.* 1850. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Gift of Miss Gertrude McCheyne.

18. A native school. Water-colour by a Calcutta artist. *c.* 1826. Private Collection. Photo: The Harvard University Art Museums.

19. A Bengali bride and groom. Water-colour by a Calcutta artist. *c.* 1826. Private Collection. Photo: The Harvard University Art Museums.

sits on the ground, firmly holding on to his stick. Like him, the students too wear only dhotis, clearly showing that wearing shirts had not yet become common for boys even in Çalcutta. That the artist knew Bengali is evident from the Bengali alphabet written on several boards and on the scrolls of paper being used by the students. The English letters alternating with the Bengali alphabet, however, are mere scribbles. The artist couldn't even write the English numerals on the small board in the middle of the classroom correctly. The function of the English gentleman in the chair is not clear. Is he supposed to be the English teacher, as has often been assumed, or an inspector of schools?

The second picture, of "A Bengali bride and groom," shows a Bengali couple on *Fig. 19* their wedding night (the third night known as *phoolsajya* or the flowery bed). Perhaps in those days the practice of decorating the four-poster with flowers was not very common. In the shy, doll-like bride with her lowered head, the artist has given us a very accurate representation of the typical Bengali bride. He has not forgotten the mosquito net, and as a whimsical touch he draws our attention to the crookedly hung picture high on the wall. It is a European picture reflecting the prevailing tastes of the educated and affluent Bengalis of the nineteenth century. The Marble Palace in Calcutta was the most ambitious repository of this love for things European. The master artist of the Adams album was indeed a courageous artist of his time, and perhaps the most graphic social commentator and satirist the Company School ever produced. One must not also forget Mr Adams himself, for without his broad-mindedness, the



20. Nala and Damayanti. Lithograph by an unknown artist. Calcutta, 1883. Paul F. Walter Collection.

unknown Bengali artist could not have left this beguiling and enchanting visual record of the Calcutta society he knew.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, a number of factors contributed to the steady decline in the demand for works by traditional Indian artists. The first was the 1857 mutiny already mentioned. The second factor was the invention of the camera, which became sufficiently popular by the end of the century to reduce the demand for artists. Moreover, strange as it may seem, the foundation in 1854 of the School of Art and Industry proved to be detrimental to the traditional artists. This was for the artist a new kind of institution that no longer recognized the prerogative of a hereditary profession and the tradition of apprenticeship. Enter the gentleman amateur, and a new age dawned in which art was redefined. The work of artists trained in art schools would increasingly come to be recognized as "fine art," as opposed to that of the traditional artists which would be branded as craft or "folk art."

Much art continued to be produced in Calcutta during the second half of the nineteenth century, although not only for British patrons. In fact, a type of art not discussed here because it was produced for Indian patrons is that of traditional images. These were made for seasonal religious festivals (see figure 17). Calcutta remains the most important centre for such clay sculpture which should receive more attention than it has done in academic circles. Kalighat continued to produce its distinctive pictures well into the twentieth century (as has been discussed elsewhere in this volume). Many artists were employed in making woodcut prints, some of which were coloured and sold as prints, while others were needed for reproduction in almanacs, mythological works, and book illustrations. The first illustrated book in Bengali was published in Calcutta in 1816. By the mid-nineteenth century wood-block printing was a flourishing trade among the Calcutta artists. In this medium, however, European influence became particularly pronounced towards the end of the century.

The Calcutta School of Art, certainly contributed greatly towards popularizing European techniques among Indians, both artists and patrons. It is rather curious that almost seventy-five years after the traditional artists working in Calcutta and elsewhere had mastered these skills, the whole matter should have become an issue again after the foundation of the Calcutta School. A typical example of the neo-European style picture
Fig. 20 is a lithograph of a mythological subject produced by the Calcutta Art Studio Company in 1883. The company was formed by a group of artists trained in the Calcutta School of Art. Except for its subject, there is nothing Indian about the style. Even the figural forms are derived directly from European sources. Influenced by the works of the Travancore artist Raja Ravi Varma, who was the most sought-after Indian painter during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, this stylistic mode was the forebear of the later "calendar" style, which continues to enjoy popularity across the country to this day. The patrons of such art, however, were no longer the British but Indians.

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Early Photography in Calcutta

Siddhartha Ghosh

Within a year of the invention of the daguerreotype camera in 1839, Thacker Spinck & Co., a leading book-seller and stationer of Calcutta was advertising the device in the *Friend of India*. Two years later, *Sambad Bhaskar* was the first Bengali newspaper to advertise the facility of having one's likeness taken by this strange machine. One Mr Douglas who resided in the first house to the south of Armani Bazar, conspicuous for its big margosa tree, used to charge rupees twelve for small portraits and rupees fifty for larger ones. At an extra cost of rupees eight, he would call on customers at their own residences, a service of particular benefit to the ladies.

The earliest known example of a daguerreotype taken in Calcutta survives only as a reproduction. This is an image of the famous "Sans Souci" Theatre, taken around 1840, and published in the first number of the *Bengal Past & Present* in 1907. The editors of the journal mention that the original daguerreotype was lent to them by one Mrs Perry of Barrackpur. *Fig. 1*

A word about daguerreotype: Named after its inventor, daguerreotype was the first commercially successful practical process of making a permanent imprint of an optical image by means of a camera. Daguerreotypes were taken on highly polished silver-coated copper plates made sensitive to light by a chemical process. After exposing the plates, the pictures were developed when the plates were exposed to vapours of mercury. There was no scope for duplication, and each daguerreotype is as unique, as a painting. Daguerreotype images being brittle and prone to scratches, they were usually preserved in velvet cases resembling jewel boxes topped with glass covers. These pictures need to be viewed in angled light and in front of a dark object, or else the unexposed silvered areas act as mirrors. The negative-positive process of Fox Talbot which would in time replace the daguerreotype, was an almost simultaneous invention, but it had to wait for more than twenty years and overcome many technical problems, before it could pose a serious threat to the daguerreotype.

Calcutta was witness to the battle between the photographers of Talbot's school of calotype and the Daguerrean artists, operating from photographic studios and the Daguerrean galleries respectively.

The earliest camera operator in Calcutta with a known identity is Monsieur F. M. Montairo of 7, Wellington Square. He advertised in the *Englishman* of July 6, 1844 that he was prepared to take likenesses by daguerreotype process.

Mr Schranzhoffer, a practitioner of the calotype process, opened the first photographic studio in Calcutta at 2, Kyd Street in 1848. An Englishman reporting

the event blandly declared, "the portraits are in many particulars superior to those taken by Daguerreotype."

A number of old annual directories such as the *New Calcutta Directory, Bengal Directory and (Annual) Register,* and others of different years, bear ample evidence that before 1860 the photographic studios were more vulnerable than the Daguerrean galleries. Schranzhoffer was followed by A. W. Roghe, W. A. Shepperd and Herr Krumholtz, all of whom put their shutters down within a year or two. The Daguerrean artists, on the other hand, met with immediate commercial success which enabled quite a few of them to switch over to the side of 'photography' once its technical problems were solved. J. W. Newland, O. Livezey, F. W. Baker or J. Paul, all of whom started as Daguerrean artists, ultimately changed sides. The firm of F. W. Baker was practising the art of daguerreotype along with photography as late as 1867.

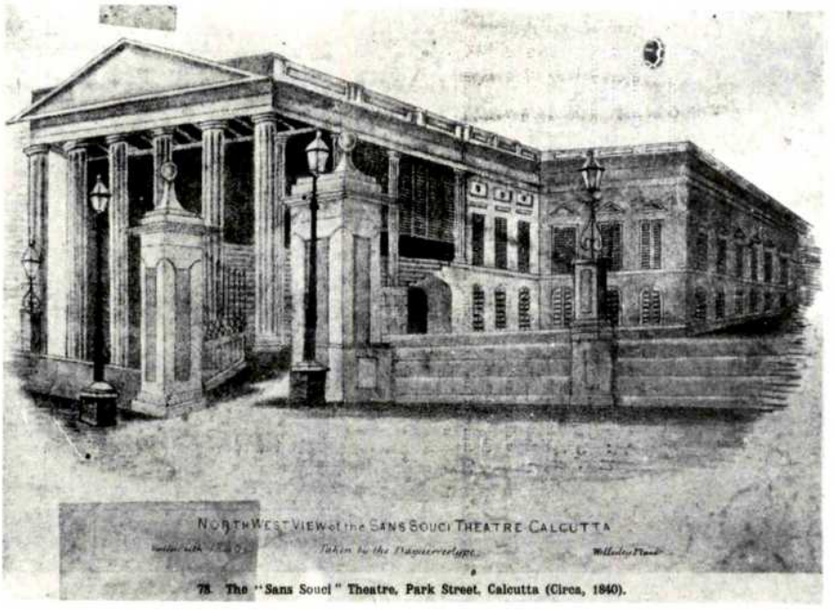
In Calcutta, the most significant and also the most long-lived of the first generation
Fig. 2 of commercial daguerrean establishments was J. W. Newland's Daguerrean gallery established in 1850, at 6, Loudon Buildings. Newland advertised the news of his studio's opening in *Sambad Purnachandradaya,* a local Bengali newspaper. The advertisement also had detailed information about a unique slide-show to be presented in the house of Babu Lalmohun Mullick of Sinduriapatti, a Bengali socialite. The oxyacetylene light used for projection, was a marvel in itself. At least two such slide-shows were held in Mullick's house that year. In subsequent years Newland held a number of slide-shows (delicately titled "Dissolving Views") at many venues including the Town Hall.

It is truly unfortunate that very little is known about the life of a man like Newland, who integrated so freely with the Bengali community. We are indebted to Newland for taking the only existing "likeness" of the famous poet and the journalist Ishwar Chandra Gupta. He took the daguerreotype only days before the poet's demise in 1859, when Ishwar Chandra was on his deathbed. After Ishwar Chandra's death, the daguerreotype portrait was photographically copied by one Ashutosh Kar who sold some thousand prints priced at rupee one each. The original daguerreotype is lost forever but halftone block prints made from it have survived. The "Chota Raja" of Paikpara, Iswar Chandra Singh (one of the founders of the famous theatre of Belgachia where Madhusudan Dutta's *Sharmistha* was first staged), also took his lessons in daguerreotype from Newland. Iswar Chandra Singh later became an executive member of the Photographic Society of Bengal when it was founded in 1856.

Very few daguerreotypes have survived the hot and humid climate of Calcutta, but there are notable exceptions. Two excellent views taken from the top of the Ochterlony Monument (Shahid Minar) by an unknown artist, lie somewhat over-preserved, in an iron chest in the Victoria Memorial Hall. As far as it is known, only one original daguerreotype taken by Newland still survives, in the competent custody of the Science Museum of London.

Few books and articles have been written on the history of photography in India, and other than the one by G. Thomas of Bangalore, all have been written by Western scholars. It is unfortunate that Western historians chose to speak only of their kinsmen, the European photographers in India. Lala Deen Dayal is the lone Indian photographer of the nineteenth century fortunate enough to attract their notice. Admittedly photography was introduced by the Europeans and they were its earliest practitioners, but it cannot be also denied that "their" India—in terms of "photographic opportunities"—was merely a wild, exotic, and picturesque country, inhabited by

1. The "Sans Souci" Theatre of Calcutta. *c.* 1840. Photo: Siddhartha Ghosh. The earliest known example of a daguerreotype picture taken in Calcutta, which has survived only as a reproduction.



78. The "Sans Souci" Theatre, Park Street, Calcutta (Circa, 1840).

2. A daguerreotype portrait by J. W. Newland of Calcutta. *c.* 1850. Photo: Siddhartha Ghosh.

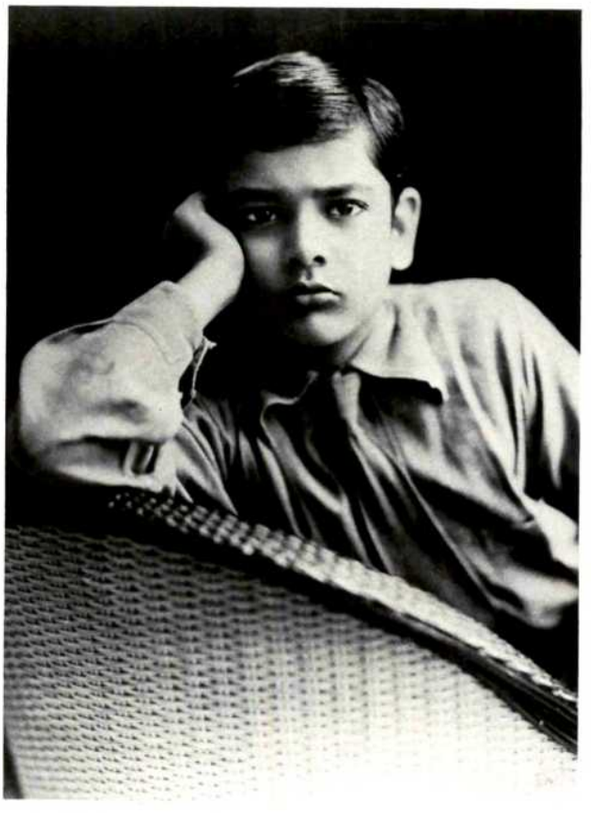
3. Mother and child. First decade of the 20th century. Hand painted photograph framed in ivory. Courtesy Reba Ghosh.

strange animals and still stranger people—mystics, barbarians, and primitive tribes practising cruel and fantastic magical rites.

"Their focus was. . . on the frontier, on the army, on sports, on the great monuments from India's past. . . They were interested in the romance of India, represented by the Princes, in the pomp and circumstance of the Viceroy . . ." Ainslie Embree struck the right chord when he added, "The great achievement of the photographers was not that they recorded the 'real India,' but that they presented with such candor how they, and those for whom they worked, felt about India."

Bourne & Shepherd and Johnston & Hoffmann were the two legendary houses which practically ruled the commercial photographic activities of Calcutta for decades. Bourne & Shepherd of Calcutta, claimed to be the oldest existing photographic studio of the world, was founded by Samuel Bourne (famed for his expedition to the Himalayas), in Simla. The Calcutta studio of the firm was opened in the 1860s. The nineteenth-century Calcutta street scenes taken by Bourne & Shepherd are of great documentary value and are much admired as excellent pieces of craftsmanship. Nonetheless, Bourne & Shepherd's Calcutta is somewhat anaemic, too clean, and exceedingly glossy—a saga of the Englishmen, a brick and mortar story to highlight the growth of a city in an Oriental wasteland. Rabindranath Tagore in his inimitable style made an oblique reference to the above in *Paschim Jatrir Diary*:

> It is the Chitpur Road and not the municipal gardens of the European locality which has a place in the precinct of art. . . The Eden Garden of Calcutta may find a place at the bottom of a list of photographs but Chitpur Road belongs to the dignified mansion of art.



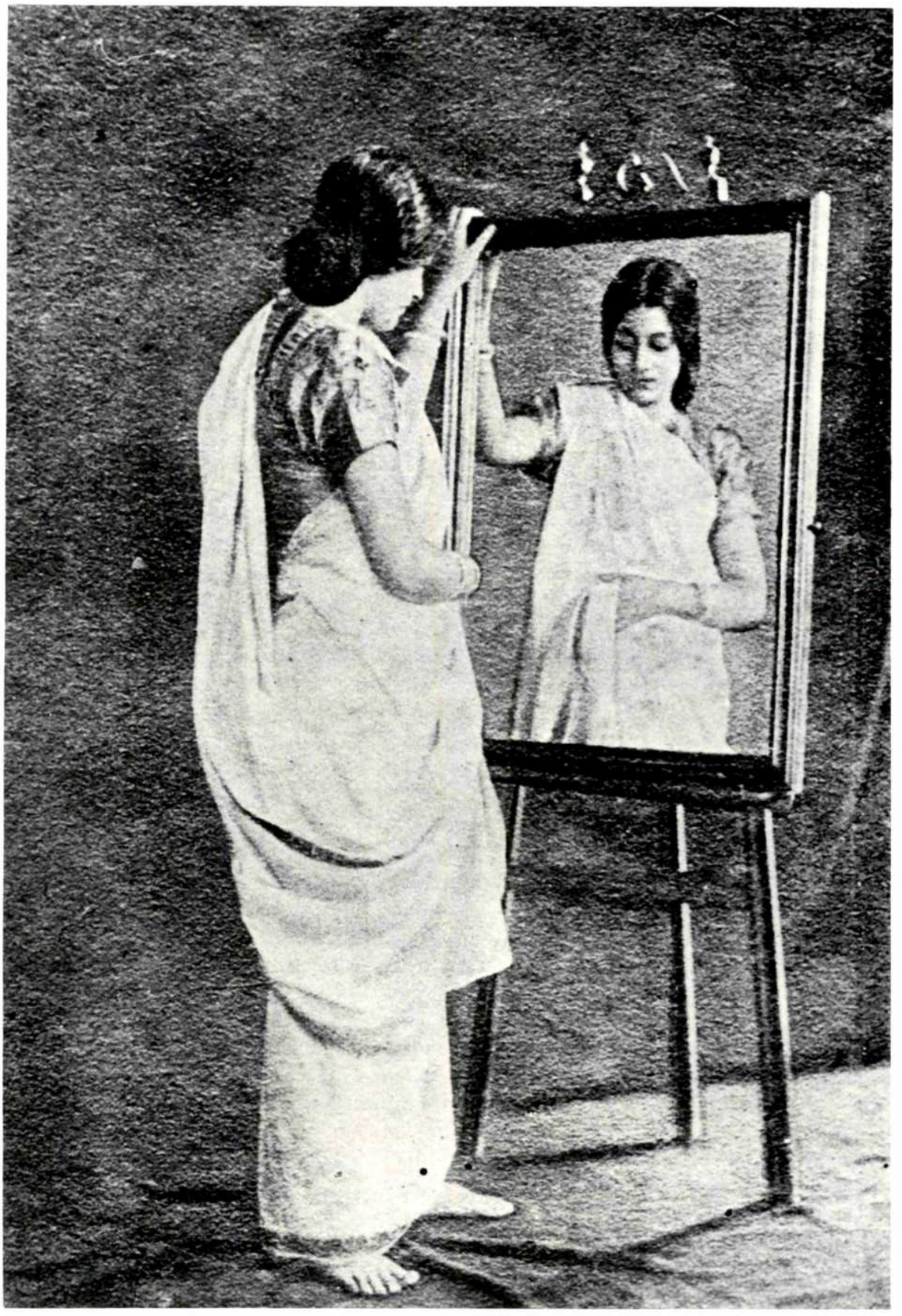
4. Arani Bannerji, by Prodyot Coomar Tagore, the first Indian Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society. Photo: Siddhartha Ghosh.

It would be wrong to assume that the Bengali photographers were much the wiser and arrived on the scene representing a radical Indian counterpoint. Only recently, a reputed Bengali art-critic sermonized, after going through a book on the history of photography in Bengal, that no nineteenth-century Bengali photographer could match the excellence of Lala Deen Dayal. The Bengali photographers were also criticized for confining themselves within their studios. To be fair, however, it should be pointed out that Lala Deen Dayal, who found employment in the Nizam's Court, Hyderabad, was the Photographer Royal. He was commissioned to do most of what he covered—landscapes, portraits, constructional activities, public and court life. No Bengali commercial photographer of the time was fortunate enough to have such patronage.

Judith Gutman does not belong to the band of Western writers producing coffee-table books on the history of photography in India. In her book, *Through Indian Eyes* she is of the opinion that early Indian photographers had a distinct mode of expression and that the artistic merits of their photographs should be judged from the point of view of traditional Indian aesthetics. Gutman has tried to bridge the gap between Indian painting and photography as regards the concept of space and their arrangement
Fig. 3 or composition. Particularly illuminating is her treatise on painted photographs.

From the very beginning, the acceptance of photographs—the ease with which photographs made their way into even very orthodox Hindu families, was rather unusual. No other product of the nineteenth-century Western technology was given such a welcome. The contemporary literature of the period is replete with tangential remarks and satirical observations concerning the introduction of mechanical objects

5. A study, by Arya Kumar Chaudhuri. *c.* 1913. Photo: Siddhartha Ghosh.



6. A bromoil (bromide print finished with oil) by Arya Kumar Chaudhuri. *c.* 1914.
Photo: Siddhartha Ghosh.

such as the gaslight, the steam-engine, the bicycle, the gramophone, and the motor car. It is well known that when the first steam-pump was installed in Calcutta for water supply, objections were raised regarding the purity of water, as the pump had leather buckets and grease was used as a lubricant. The pumped water was not even allowed for the cleaning of the roads in the Hindu quarters of Calcutta. But no such objection was ever levelled against the photographs, though in the early days the printing paper contained albumen (a protein contained in egg-white) and in later years emulsions of gelatine, a product made from bones and other animal matter. The Hindus have never resented a photograph because for them a photo was synonymous with a photographic portrait, and a portrait invariably meant something living, much like the image of a deity. A photographic portrait was not just a slice of reality encapsulated, but an image. A man may die, but that is because he is real, while his soul is immortal and so is his image. A manifestation of this Hindu view of life is still to be observed in the religious rites of *sradha*—during which a garlanded photograph of the deceased is placed on the sacrificial bed. Also, during the Dol or the festival of Holi, photographs of ancestors are offered *abir* powders. It is also common to find vermilion smeared on the glass cover of a photograph—denoting that the long deceased lady in the photograph was fortunate not to be widowed.

Susan Sontag has devoted an entire book to the subject of realism and photography. She could have more easily reached her conclusion, that photographs are basically surreal in nature, had she been acquainted with Hindu orthodox family life. She might then have understood how very effortlessly an idolater, whether a photographer or his subject, or an admirer of the photograph, recognizes photographs as images. Such a man may not have Sontag's clarity of expression, but the Hindu view of life imbues photographs with surrealism. Hung on the wall alongside litho and block prints of gods and goddesses, photographs of celebrities such as Vidyasagar, Bankim Chandra, and Ramkrishna, and photographs of ancestors are worshipped—not because they are real, but because they are images, idols.

This discussion will hopefully clarify why the early Indian commercial photographer took to portrait-work.

The story of the spread of amateur photography is a more dramatic one. A singular political scuffle in 1857 caused a breach between the European and Indian practitioners of the art that could never be amended. When the Photographic Society of Bengal was founded in 1856 the famous Indologist Rajendralal Mitra was appointed treasurer. The next year, he acted as both secretary and treasurer. Similarly, during the first eighteen months in the life of the society, among its members were such well-known Bengali figures as Gourdas Bysack, Iswar Chandra Singh of Paikpara, Preonath Sett, Girish Chunder Ghosh (the editor of the *Hindu Patriot*), and Dr Kanaylal De, (a physician and an accomplished chemist, who started preparing photographic chemicals which were highly recommended by the society). In 1857 we find that among the one hundred members of the society about thirty were Bengali. In the same year, Rajendralal Mitra made a speech in the Town Hall in support of the Black Act which empowered Indian judges to try Europeans. The speech made the European community so furious that there was a rumour that an attempt on Mitra's life might be made. Mitra fled Town Hall in secret. Some of the European members of the Photographic Society, headed by Dr Mouat, then expelled Mitra from the society in a most undemocratic and shameful manner. There was a great debate regarding the issue, but ultimately almost

7. A portrait of Rabindranath Tagore by Sukumar Ray, the second Indian Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society. 1905. Photo: Siddhartha Ghosh.

8. Nilmadhav De, founder of the Bengal Photographers, the first studio set up by a Bengali in Calcutta. Photo: Siddhartha Ghosh.

9. A studio portrait of a lady, taken at the Bengal Photographer's in the 1890s. From the family album of Sarat Mitra, Calcutta.

all the Indian members of the society resigned *en masse* in protest. After this, until the 1920s the Photographic Society of Bengal, and later the Indian Photographic Society, remained an exclusive playground for the Europeans and Eurasians with a few exceptions such as Bara Thakur of Tripura, Maharaja Prodyot Coomar Tagore, and Arya Kumar Chaudhuri.

Strange as it seems Calcutta's status as the citadel of early photographic activities in eastern India was rivalled only by Agartala, the capital of far-flung Tripura, a tiny hill state. The maharaja of Tripura, Birchandra Manikya was a great enthusiast of photography. He started taking daguerreotypes in the mid-1850s and later, keeping track of latest discoveries, he lost no time in switching over to modern processes. He was the first Indian to found a camera club, and held annual photographic exhibitions in the palace of Agartala. The maharaja even taught photography to the young maharani. Neither the maharaja nor the maharani participated in the society's exhibitions at Calcutta, but they communicated with the secretary and sent prints. Birchandra's second son, Samarendra Chandra Dev Burman, known as Bara Thakur of Tripura, was a great name in photographic circles in the 1890s and his pictorial photographs won many an award in Calcutta and London. He specialized in platinotype prints following Pizzighelli's methods and spoke about this technique at a meeting of the Photographic Society of India on January 7, 1892. In 1899 the society's journal contained a photogravure reproduction of *Sunset*, a platinotype print by Bara Thakur. *Artistic Landscape Photography*, a book on the theory and practice of pictorial composition, by A. H. Wall, published in London before the turn of the century, also reproduced an image of Bara Thakur's, *Composition of Wood and Water.*

Of the other two members of the Photographic Society mentioned before, Maharaja
Fig. 4 Prodyot Coomar Tagore was the first Indian to be elected a Fellow of the Royal
Fig. 5 Photographic Society and Arya Kumar was the first Indian to bag the society's "Best Award" for his portrait of Louis Hillier in 1913. Subsequently, he won numerous awards in the society's exhibitions for his contributions in different fields including autochromes, the first practical process of colour photography. Arya Kumar was also a painter of repute and in later years devoted himself to the practice of bromoil process, for reasons which he clarified in an article in the June 1920 issue of the journal of the Indian Academy of Art:

> It is very rarely that nature places the ideal picture ready-made before the camera. The worker with any artistic sense has therefore to seek for subjects which approximate to those formed in his mind and then rely to a certain extent on treatment by some technical process. I venture to add these notes on Bromoil as it is the only process by which the prints betray that personal
> *Fig. 6* feeling which an artist is always aiming at. Bromoil is a combination of bromide printing with the oil pigment process.

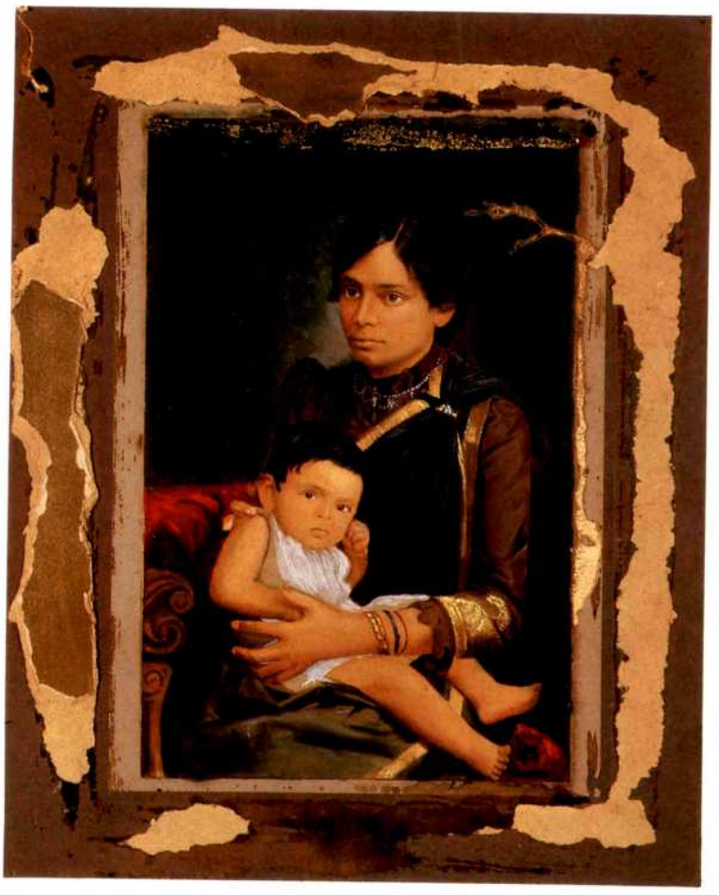
Arya Kumar wrote two articles for the Bengali periodical *Bharati* on the quest of beauty through photography. But the first Bengali article on the aesthetics of photography came from the pen of Sukumar Ray, the so-called Lewis Carrol of Bengal and the father
Fig. 7 of the renowned film-maker Satyajit Ray. Sukumar was the second Indian to be elected a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society, in 1922, only a year before his premature death. Writing in 1911, Sukumar expressed absolute clarity of thought—refusing to elevate photography to the realm of art by intricate technical manipulations, while strongly confirming that even within the limits imposed by the camera, there are aesthetic opportunities. Sukumar's view was a very modern one indeed which recognized

photography as a distinct medium of expression with a language of its own.

Sukumar inherited the interest in photography from his father Upendrakisor who as a writer and illustrator needs no introduction among Bengalis. Upendrakisor also made his mark as a painter and musician. For his scientific researches alone, he is worthy of immortal fame. He brought a mathematical precision to halftone camera work, and nine of his research papers were published between 1897 and 1911 in *Penrose's Annual*—considered to be the printers' bible. To this day, no other Indian has made such original contributions to the field of process work. He also invented a useful device known as the Automatic Screen Distance Indicator which used to be sold as an attachment to the process camera manufactured by the Penrose Company. In the nineteenth century, Jagdish Chandra Bose, the great Indian scientist, was the only other Bengali who investigated the scientific principles of photography. He pioneered X-ray photography in Calcutta and lectured on the subject at the Royal Photographic Society of London.

The Bengal Photographers, the first commercial studio run by a Bengali in Calcutta, was established in 1862 by Nilmadhav De. Initially situated at 107, Radhabazar, it enjoyed great fame, and was in existence till the second decade of the twentieth century. *Figs. 8, 9*

Another important Bengali studio, the Calcutta Art Studio at 185, Bowbazar Street, was founded by the lithographer and artist Ananda Bagchi along with four of his pupils, in 1876. It was ultimately owned by Nabakumar Biswas and still enjoys the reputation *Fig. 10*



10. Swayangprabha Devi, a niece of Rabindranath Tagore, and her son Abani Bannerji. Hand painted photograph by the Calcutta Art Studio. *c.* 1888. Courtesy Manju Bannerji.

11. A portrait of a Muslim gentleman taken in the studio of S. Nasiruddin. *c.* 1890. From the family album of Sarat Mitra, Calcutta.

of a good printer under the able management of Nabakumar's descendants, but after the 1920s its photographic activities ceased.

Between its tooled-leather covers, a Victorian photographic album contains thick pressed-board pages, lavishly decorated with floral motifs in chromolitho prints. It usually accommodates photographs of two sizes, namely the carte-de-visite and the cabinet. The photographs, pasted on mount boards, the backs of which bore the names and addresses of the studios in elegant calligraphy, had to be slipped in through apertures provided in the album pages. A scrutiny of some such albums of long-time residents of Calcutta, reveals that while the anglicized upper middle class went mostly for Bourne & Shepherd or Johnston & Hoffmann, the orthodox Hindu families were equally taken with the Bengal Photographers and the Calcutta Art Studio. At the turn of the century the studios of S. C. Sen, T. P. Sen, and S. Nasiruddin also won the favour of the Indian community of Calcutta. *Figs. 11, 12*

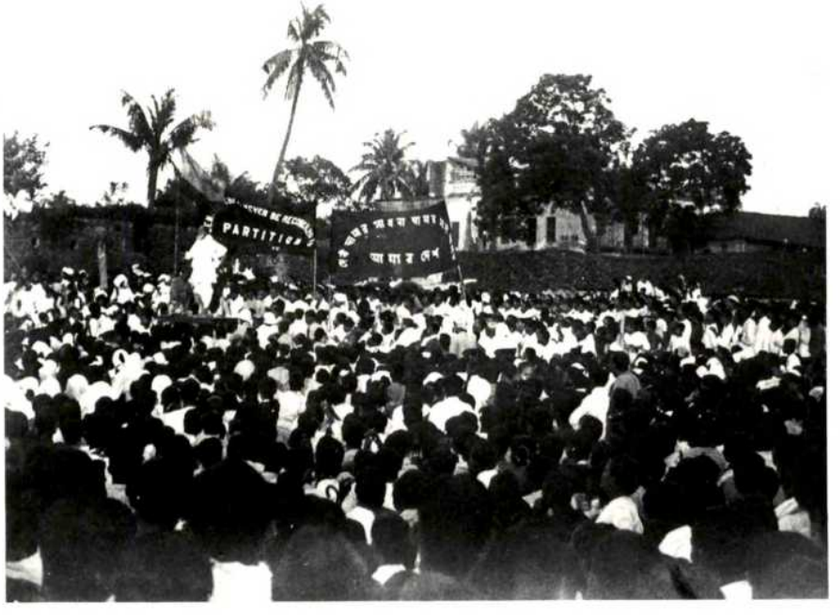
Of the four oldest existing studios of Calcutta, Mukherjee Studio (established 1910) in Bowbazar Street, Universal Art Gallery (established 1914), D. Ratan & Co. (established 1921) in Cornwallis Street, and C. Guha (established *c.* 1920) in College Square, only the old props, furniture, and grandfather cameras of D. Ratan and C. Guha still perpetuate the magical charm of the sepia and gold-toned years.

Ladies behind the purdah persuaded Mrs E. Mayor to open her Photographic Rooms at the corner of 7, Old Court House Street in 1863. The second lady photographer to open a zenana studio in Calcutta was one Mrs Garrick, possibly the wife of

12. A portrait of a young man taken at the studio of T. P. Sen in the 1890s. From the family album of Sarat Mitra, Calcutta.

13. A self-portrait of Annapurna Dutta. *c.* 1920. Photo: Siddhartha Ghosh.

14. A group photograph by Gaganendranath Tagore. *c.* 1892. Photo: Siddhartha Ghosh.



15. Anti-partition meeting, by H. Bose. 1905. Photo: Siddhartha Ghosh.

D. Garrick, photographer and painter of backdrops for Calcutta theatres. In 1877 she founded her zenana studio in Waterloo Street. In fact, quite a number of lady photographers found employment in the studios of nineteenth-century Calcutta.

Sarojini Ghosh was the first Indian lady to establish a studio in Calcutta, in 1898. The following advertisement placed by her in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of February 16, 1899 is worth quoting:

THE MAHILA ART STUDIO
AND
PHOTOGRAPHIC STORE
32 Cornwallis Street, Calcutta

A thoroughly secluded studio for Ladies under Sreemuttee Sarojini Ghosh. She is, says the Patrika, a Hindu lady artist of great admire, she has executed for us some orders, and the way they have been finished leave no doubt as to her efficiency and ability as a photographer . . .

(Bromide enlargements, platinotypes, photographs on silks, etc. are executed in effective style and at moderate rates).

Photographic chemicals wholesale and retail. Best quality guaranteed.
Best value warranted.

Fig. 13 Another important Bengali lady photographer of the city, was Annapurna Dutta, who appeared on the scene in the 1920s. For over two decades photography was her source of income, and judging by the self-portrait included here, she was technically highly proficient. It could not have been easy in those days for Bengali women to become professional photographers. By the 1930s it became more common for women to take up photography and among the many distinguished amateurs, mention should be made of Mira Chaudhuri, Indira Devi, Annapurna Goswami, and the two sisters, Devalina and Monobina Sen Ray.

This article may be brought to a close by briefly mentioning two photographs that may not be exciting in terms of aesthetic merit, but are nonetheless, interesting documents of the city's history. Moreover, in their own way, each provides a typical vignette of the *Fig. 14* stimulating and turbulent saga of the city's development. In one of these, taken around 1892, there is a glimpse of the *bonhomie* that prevailed among the famous Tagores of Calcutta. The scene is the studio room at 5, Jorasanko, the ancestral home of the Tagores. The characters wearing dressing-gowns, are from left to right, the artist Abanindranath Tagore, Satyaprasad Ganguly, Samarendranath Tagore, and Arunendranath Tagore. The photograph was taken by the famous artist and cartoonist Gaganendranath Tagore who took up photography at an early age.

Fig. 15 The other photograph, taken by H. Bose in 1905, shows a meeting of protest against the hated partition of Bengal. Once again, the photograph may be no more than adequate technically, but it too, captures an essential aspect of life in Calcutta for which the city has since remained famous.

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Calcutta and the Early Growth of the Bengal School of Painting

Amita Ray

The Beginnings

The school of painting generally known as the Bengal School has come to be recognized as the harbinger of modern art in India. The inspiring force behind the new art movement was Abanindranath Tagore (1871-1951) of Calcutta, even though the Travancore artist Ravi Varma had become a familiar name across the country well before Tagore. Ravi Varma, however, did not leave the kind of legacy that Abanindranath did. Hence, the story of modern art in India must begin with Abanindranath and Calcutta rather than Ravi Varma and Madras.

Abanindranath belonged to one of the most illustrious families of Calcutta and was the nephew of the poet Rabindranath Tagore. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century their ancestral home in Jorasanko provided the most intellectually stimulating and liberal environment in which a boy could grow up, within the Victorian world. This is quite evident from the fact that although he was a member of the gentry who did not take art seriously, he was allowed to learn at an art school.

The school, known originally as the School of Art and Industry was founded in 1854 as an adjunct of the Industrial Art Society. Among the inspiring forces behind the organization of this society were well-known personalities of Calcutta such as Rajendralal Mitra, Peary Chand Mitra, Ramgopal Ghosh, Jatindramohan Tagore, and Mr Justice Pratt. The school's first principal was H. H. Locke and the curriculum offered drawing, painting, design, lithography, wood-engraving, and photography. One of the objectives of the school was to enable Indian pupils to master the technique of "European realism." This the students did without much difficulty—as Indian artists had done much earlier. Traditional Indian artists at the Mughal court had been familiar with European works as early as the sixteenth century. Since the last quarter of the eighteenth century when the British were firmly established in the country, Indian artists had begun to work with and for European artists as well as for the various Surveys and other government organizations. They had to master the techniques of perspective and three dimensionalism that were the hallmarks of the European pictorial tradition. As far as the students of the art school were concerned, the realistic tradition that they learnt enabled them to be good imitators without displaying any originality or aesthetic direction. By and large, the students became excellent illustrators supplying drawings or wood-engravings for all sorts of books. For instance, the monumental archaeological work on Orissa by

Rajendra Lal Mitra published in 1875, was profusely illustrated with drawings prepared by the students of the school.

In 1886 when Abanindranath joined the art school, its principal was O. Ghilardi, a well-known Italian artist. Charles Palmer, an Englishman, and Ghilardi were two of Abanindranath's teachers. Ghilardi was not only an excellent teacher, but also a sincere admirer of Indian art. However, he remained in India for less than a year and therefore left a rather limited though important legacy for his students. He taught them to stop imitating Europe blindly and not to neglect their own artistic heritage.

The sapling that Ghilardi planted may well have withered but for the arrival of a remarkable European, E. B. Havell, who became director of the school in 1896. He was both a visionary and a man of action and should really be considered to be the founding father of the modern art movement in India. Certainly without his empathy with Indian art and his vision, it is unlikely that Abanindranath in particular, or the Bengal School of painting in general, could have developed the way they did over the next two decades or so.

Havell soon realized the lamentable gaps in the curriculum of the school. He realized the futility of teaching European techniques without a proper base. They were turning out hundreds of copyists but not one true artist. Thus instead of teaching outworn European techniques to create a good number of copyists, he was in favour of carrying out original works on Indian models based on Indian tradition and heritage. He planned to give students opportunities for independent work based on Indian traditional art. Besides introducing many reforms towards rejuvenation of the school, he took a keen interest in elevating public taste in art. To this end he was eager to set up a new tradition in the study of art—not only by introducing new courses, but also by rearranging the gallery with specimens of industrial and applied art from Benares, Nepal, Tibet, and Persia. Havell also included a good number of paintings of the Mughal, Rajasthani, and Pahari schools. By 1905, the art gallery became a full-fledged gallery of Indian arts and crafts.

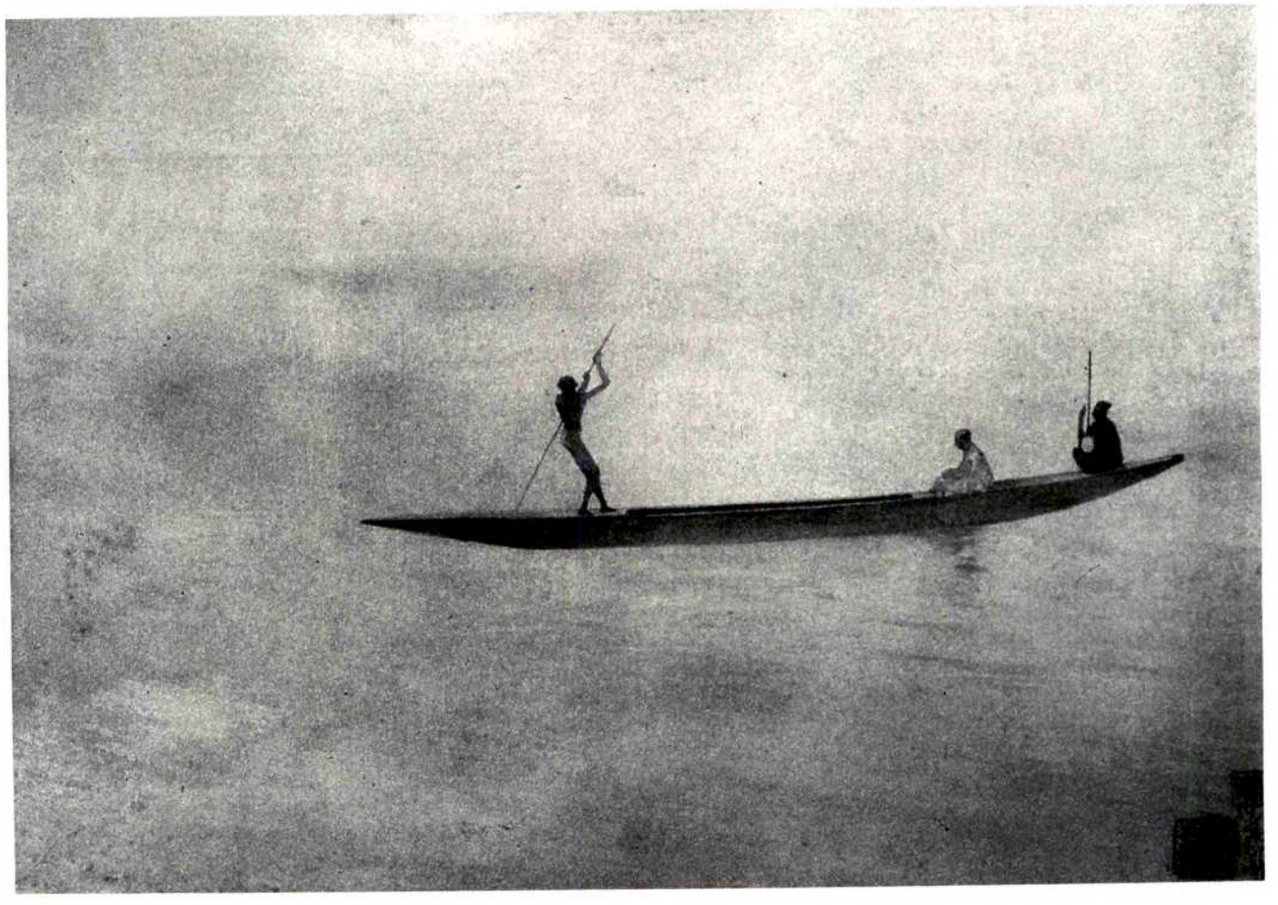
This was the birth of a new era in the history of art education in Bengal. The School of Industrial Art set up at this stage a fine arts centre, which subsequently became famous as the Calcutta School. Meanwhile, a new intellectual quest, known as "orientology" stirred up the imagination of the Western academicians who saw "Hinduism as the oldest cradle of civilization and centre for all knowledge of art and science." The decade starting from 1900 also marked the onset of a new nationalist movement. The force behind this movement was the urban middle class—English speaking, Western oriented, and the products of the colonial education.

In early 1902, Sister Nivedita presented Okakura Kakuzo, a Japanese artist, to the people of Calcutta. Okakura preached the message of the "awakening of the East," and the "oneness of Asia." His book, *Ideals of the East*—the first ever written by an Asian in the English language—giving an identity to the people of the Orient, took the world by storm. Another important event during this time was the visit of A. K. Coomaraswamy to Calcutta in 1908. Since art study came within the purview of nationalism, both Havell and Coomaraswamy extracted much from this newly-grown intellectual exercise. But the idea of a spiritual and mystical India, predominant in the subject of orientology, influenced the perception of art of these two mentors as well. Interestingly, by giving leadership, Havell brought the entire rationale of European orientalism to this movement. To him Indian art was spiritual and hence the artists who worked in India "revealed the life within life, the soul within soul." Coomaraswamy also believed in the

1. *Bharatmata.* Wash by Abanindranath Tagore. 1903-04. 26.67 x 15.24 cm. Rabindra Bharati Society. The use of light is controlled in a diffused glow.

same theory. He not only devoted his energies to establishing the religious and spiritual base of the traditional Indian way of life and art, but also equated his quest of identity through art with the new force of struggle against colonial power. In 1908, he delivered a series of lectures on "Art and Swadeshi," which was published in 1910 as a manifesto of the new art movement of Bengal. After this, anti-colonialism became the motto of Indian art. Abanindranath had already been initiated into this campaign at the beginning of this century. His *Bharatmata* painted in 1903-04 made a profound impression on the Indian mind.

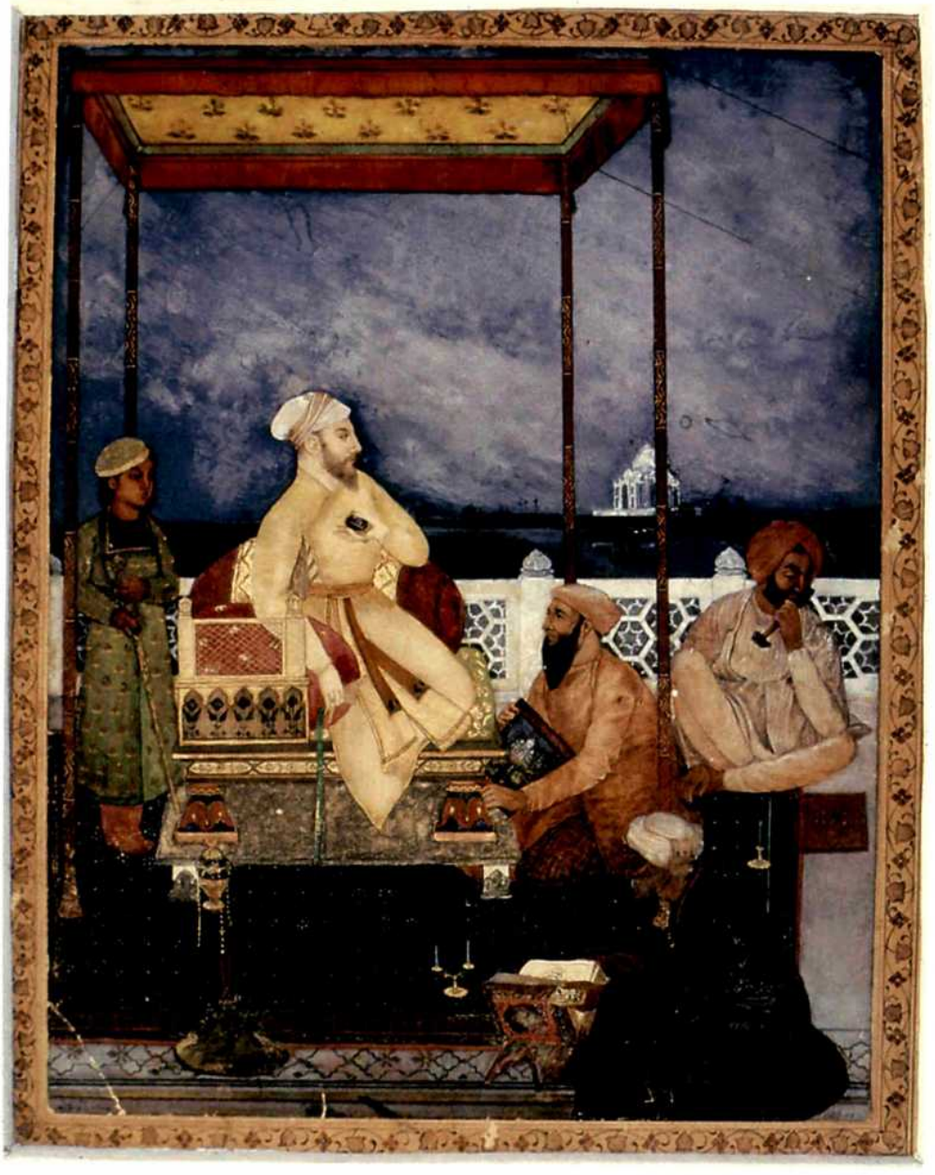
In 1905 Abanindranath joined the Government School of Art as the vice-principal "after being fully assured of his liberty in pursuance of his method of art work." As a trusted assistant to Havell he did a great deal in the sphere of the reorganization programme. The new art movement became very popular in Calcutta, and people of means became increasingly appreciative of art. The Report for 1897 to 1902 states that The pupils have decorated several private houses in Calcutta with fresco painting done in Ajanta technique. After Havell retired, Abanindranath became the officiating principal and the school entered a brilliant phase of activity. It now became common for educated Bengalis to join the school. Among the early students of this school who later became famous were Samarendranath Gupta, Asit Kumar Haldar, Nandalal Bose, Jamini Ranjan Roy, Sailendranath Dey, Hakim Mohammad Khan, K. Venkatappa, Jatindra Kumar Sen and Pramod Kumar Chattopadhyay. Lala Iswari Prasad, a reputed artist from Patna and Sridhar Mahapatra from Orissa also joined the school at the time.



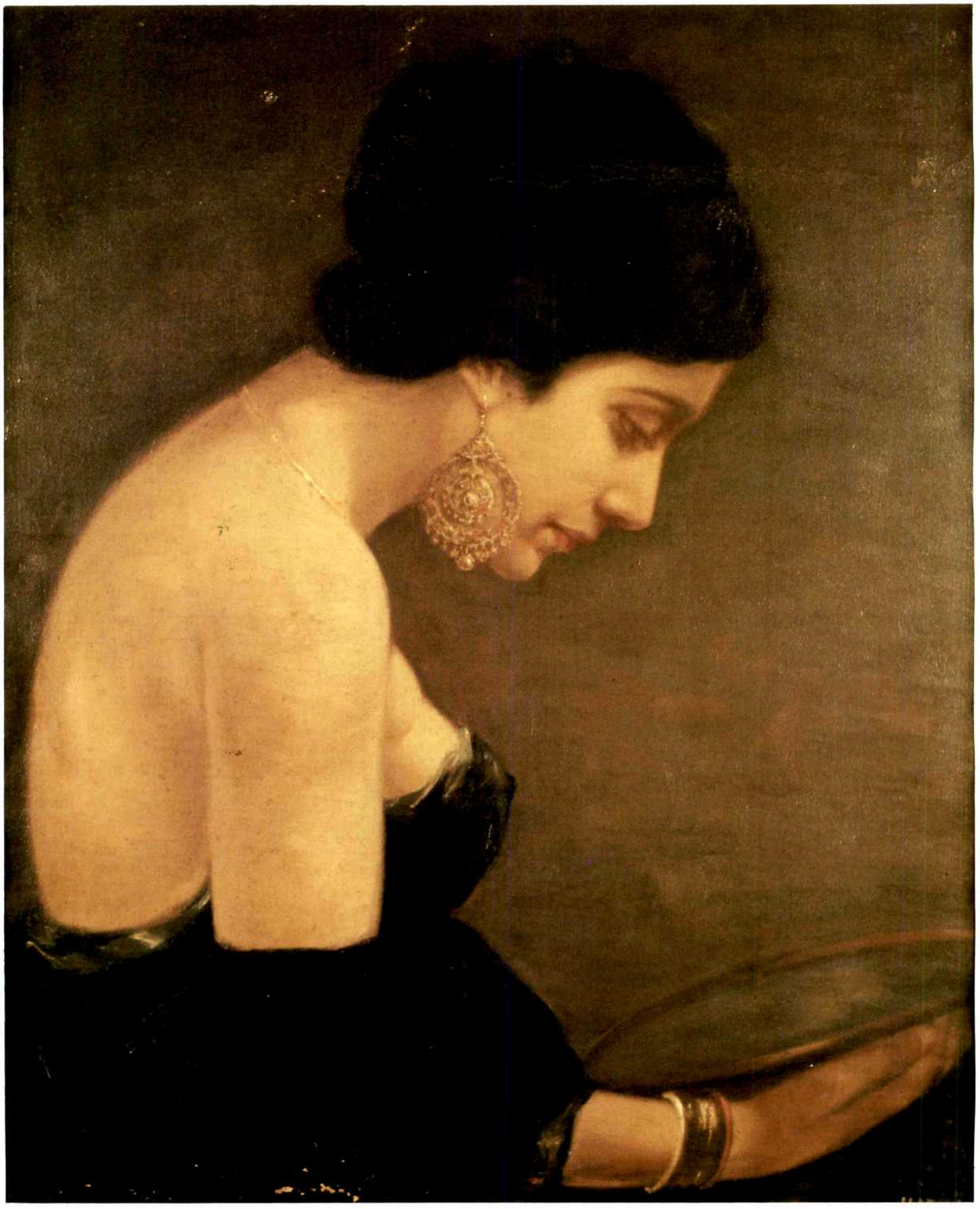
2. *Village music,* Shahjadpur series. Wash by Abanindranath Tagore. 26.67 x 36.83 cm. Rabindra Bharati Society. A charming and poetic work of great linear beauty creating an aura of mystery through the use of colours.

Two voluntary art associations, Bangiya Kala Samsad (1905) and the Indian Society of Oriental Art (1905) were formed as forums for the new movement. One of the important activities of the society was to organize exhibitions of traditional Indian painting along with Japanese and Chinese painting. These as well as works of contemporary painters were exhibited in different parts of India. Besides these exhibitions, the works of the school were published in two popular periodicals, *The Modern Review* and *Pravasi*, edited by Ramananda Chattopadhyay.

Percy Brown the principal of the school, did not at first interfere with the ideals set up by Havell-Abanindranath. As a matter of fact he was completely attuned to their system. But soon a rift between Abanindranath and Percy Brown became apparent, and in consequence Abanindranath left the school in 1915. With his departure,



3. *Building of the Taj.* Wash by Abanindranath Tagore. Late Mughal idiom, 1897-1900. 27.94 x 22.86 cm. Rabindra Bharati Society. The painting clearly shows a debt to the provincial Mughal School.



4. *Profile*. Oil by Hemen Mazumdar. 51 x 42 cm. Birla Academy of Art and Culture. This work shows facile handling and a realistic treatment of the human anatomy.

the Government School of Art ceased to play an important role in the "Swadeshi" art movement.

Jamini Prakash Ganguli who joined as the vice-principal, and trained in the tradition of European painting, was a great critic of Havell-Abanindranath's nationalistic art movement. Immediately after he joined the school, he took two steps : First, he introduced the Western art technique as a compulsory paper in the curriculum, and second, with the concurrence of Brown, he divided the Department of Fine Arts in two separate units : Fine Arts and Indian Paintings. The Department of Fine Arts based entirely on the European style and technique supervised by Jamini Prakash himself, became a great centre of attraction for the students of Calcutta. A large number of them flocked to his department, foremost among them was Atul Bose, who later became a renowned portrait painter. Hemen Mazumdar was also an important member of this group. The Indian art section under Iswari Prasad, was neglected and the number of students dwindled. The Calcutta School under Jamini Prakash earned great distinction in the field of art in the country. Though there was no conscious attempt to reach a synthesis between Eastern and Western traditions, the Calcutta School did not encourage "mechanical copying of the South Kensington system." J. Riches in the 8th Review writes, "The Calcutta School has been instrumental in creating a school of Indian painting, the reputation of which extends beyond the confines of India."

There is, therefore, no doubt that aesthetic judgement in Calcutta followed two opposing streams—one, the Havell-Abanindranath tradition, endeavouring to create a national language of art; the other following the already set tradition of European realism,

5. Office of the zamindar with portrait of artist and his officer in the typical locale of Kancharibari, Shahjadpur series. Wash by Abanindranath Tagore. 25.4 x 38.1 cm. Rabindra Bharati Society.

but rejuvenated by Jamini Prakash. While Abanindranath and his disciples were busy experimenting with traditional techniques and outlooks through the dramatic presentation of themes and a unique application of colour, the Western academic style in protest against these popular idioms and new iconography advocated a different medium of expression.

Ranada Prasad Gupta founded the Jubilee Art School where pure European techniques—perspective, light and shade, copying of live models and statuary—were taught.

Raja Ravi Varma of the Madras School, whose painting became very popular in Bengal, went a little further in placing his Indian theme in Indian attire, but figures having definite European traits—shown in glowing oil colour within a theatrical compositional scheme. The counterpart of Ravi Varma in the Calcutta School was B. P. Banerjee. The students of the Calcutta School depicted Indian mythological scenes or events of modern life but their medium of expression was European. They experimented with new techniques of chiaroscuro, perspective and photographic semblance, and thus live-studies of men and women, portraiture, landscape, and conversational pieces against the background of the interior of houses, were popular. A large number of artists such as Atul

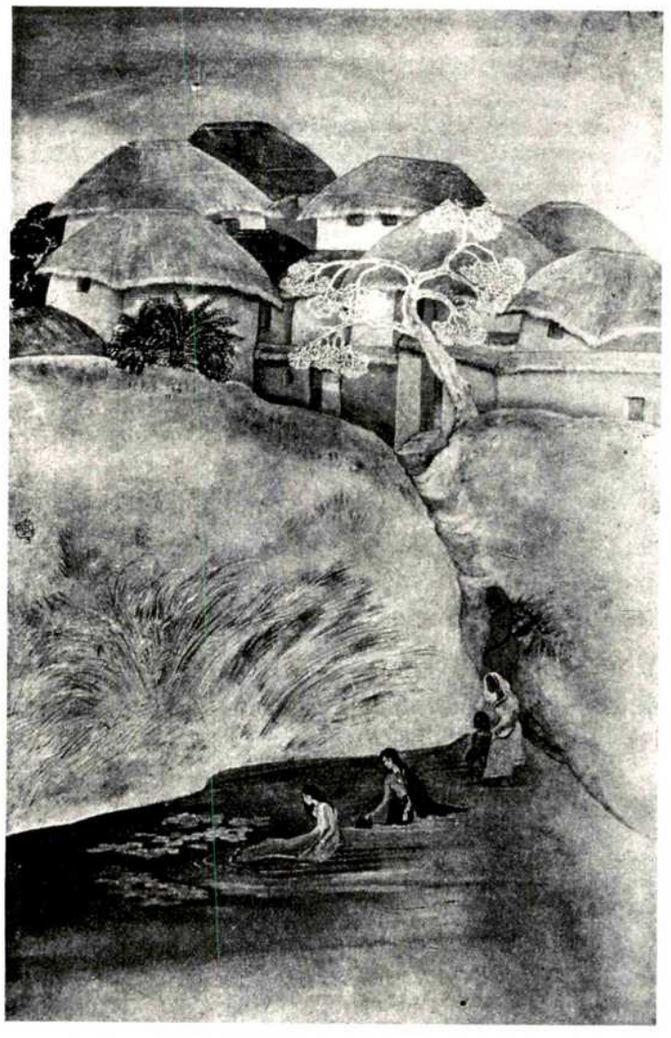
6. *Sakuntala.* Wash by Ranada Charan Ukil. 30.48 x 22.86 cm. Private Collection. The sculpturesque strength of the composition vividly shows the artist's mastery of the fundamental traits of the Indian classical tradition. The peculiarity of his art lies in the combination of reality and decorative elements.

7. *Friends.* Water-colour by Bipin Chandra Dey. 21 x 13 cm. Private Collection. This painting, though traditionally Indian, is influenced by realism which is highlighted in the individual expressions of the faces.

Bose, Kali Kinkar Ghosh Dastidar, Satis Chandra Sinha, T. Rama Rao, J. Seal, and Hemen Mazumdar had acquired mastery in this tradition under the able supervision of Jamini Prakash Ganguli. While interpreting Indian life and vision through Western oriented Indian eyes, the Calcutta School had in the course of its evolution achieved a new aesthetic identity of its own which marked the beginning of a national school of art. This possibly drew the attention of the English art critics at Wembley who renamed the Calcutta School as the Bengal School of Art.

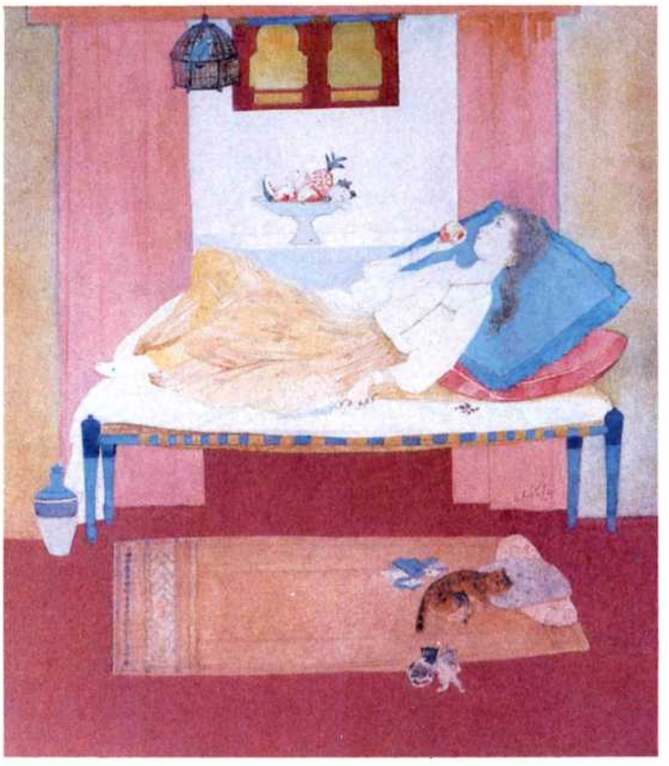
The Neo-Bengal School

Shortly after Abanindranath left the Government School of Art in 1915, he founded a new school which became known as the Neo-Bengal School, at Jorasanko. It was around this time that the Vichitra Club under Rabindranath emerged as a centre where writers, artists, singers, and dramatists could assemble under one roof. The newly founded school gave lessons in painting, etching, and modelling to young students, while

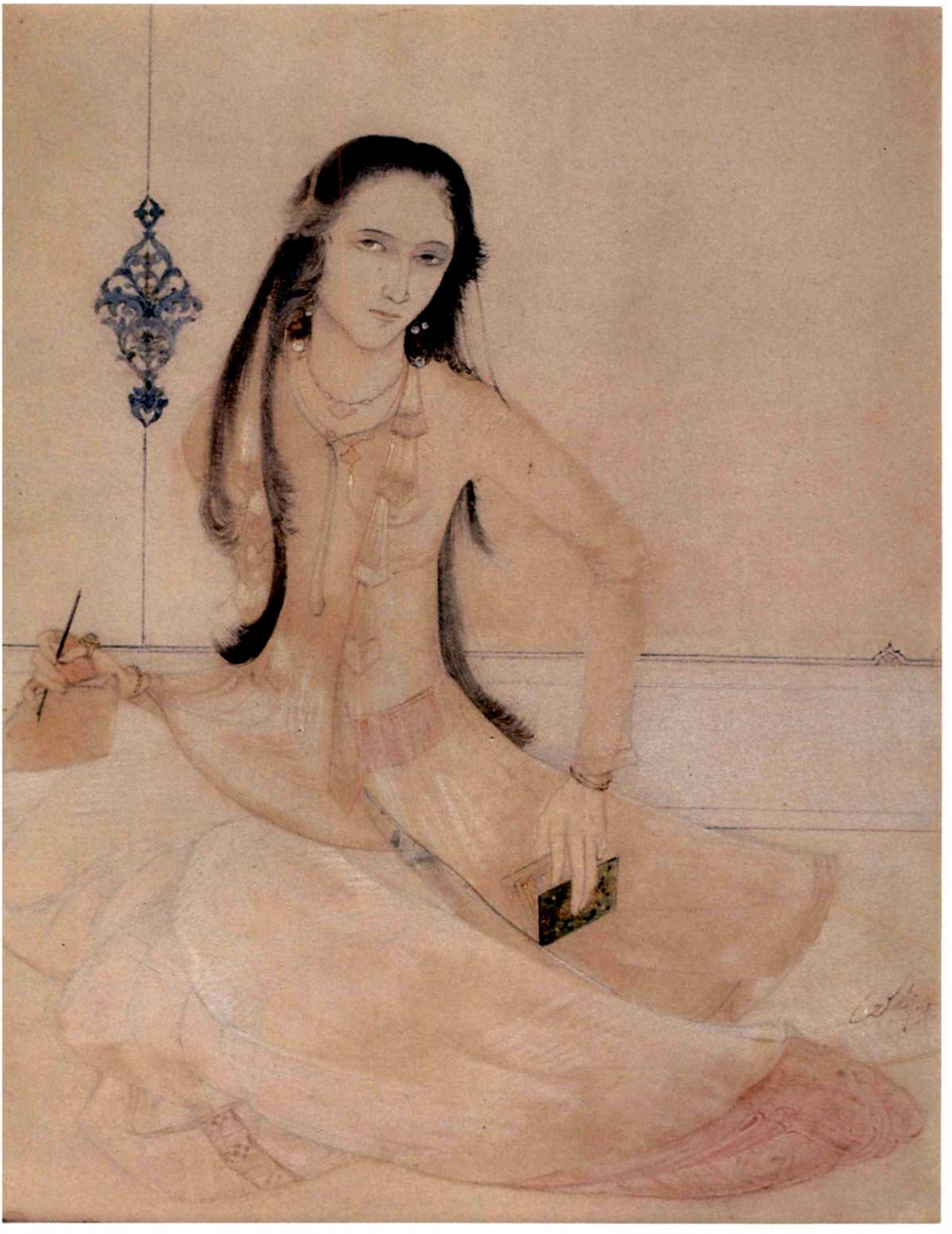


8. *The Lake.* Wash by Ramendranath Chakravarty. 33.02 x 21.59 cm. Private Collection. A view of village life in Birbhum.

9. *Three Apples* by Abanindranath Tagore, Arabian Night series. 1929. 26 x 11 cm. Rabindra Bharati Society.



10. *Kalaketu,* the hunter, Kavi Kankan Chandi series. Wash by Abanindranath Tagore. Post 1938. 20.32 x 27.94 cm. Rabindra Bharati Society. Expressive lines and modelled colour are used here to render forms.



11. *Zebunnesa.* Wash by Abanindranath Tagore. 1920-25. 25.4 x 20.32 cm. Rabindra Bharati Society. The slender figure of Zebunnesa is infused with feeling and beauty.

the Vichitra Club gave shelter and monthly allowances to young artists like Nandalal Bose, Asit Haldar, Suren Kar, Mukul Dey, and N. K. Deval. The new school did not teach sculpture, architecture, or lithography. Oil-painting was also discarded "as being too decidedly European." As a matter of fact from 1916 onwards, all activity of the Neo-Bengal School proceeded from these two centres, at least till 1919, when Visva-Bharati was founded at Santiniketan.

The dominant view of the school was to present themes representing Indian mythologies, epics, and stories including popular Islamic legends and myths in complete harmony with the personal rhythm and the rhythm of the universe. The intention was not only to create a tradition of art which would be Indian in content, but also, in style and expression. The main urge was to find a new medium. There was thus a conscious attempt to take elements from Chinese and Japanese brushwork, the classical paintings of Ajanta, the rich detailing and precision of Indian miniature paintings, as well as the transparent and liquid quality of Western water-colour paintings. As a matter of fact the new movement picked up elements and features of what were considered the best from various sources. The immediate effect was one of tremendous release of the spirit through any style found suitable. Nandalal chose *pata* painting, Gaganendranath was advised to take up graphics for caricatures depicting social contradictions and follies. The winds of change began to blow freely, but the quest of Indianness continued to enthuse the movement. Abanindranath's *navachitrakatha* became meaningful at this stage. A group of talented artists who had already been with him in the Government School of Art, such as Nandalal Bose, Surendranath Ganguli, Sailendranath Dey, Asit Kumar Haldar, Kshitindranath Majumdar, Venkatappa, Suren Kar, Bireshwar Sen, the Ukil brothers, Debi Prasad Roy Choudhury, Ramen Chakraborty, Tribhanga Ray, Mukul Dey, and Chintamoni Kar joined hands in accelerating the movement. Keeping Abanindranath at the helm as their guru or *acharya,* the Neo-Bengal School exercised an immense influence over the country. Paradoxically, while the visual perception of the school was shaped by protest against the colonial tradition, it relied on another "crutch"—limping on ancient and medieval texts of India. Thus the world of nature was conceived by Abanindranath and his disciples from the famous south verandah (*dakshiner varandah*). "The heritage of ancient India held them in its power," and they projected themselves into the glorious past, and thus found a way of self-assertion. "Romanticism met adequately their spiritual needs," and their created world delved into the mist of bygone days.

For the first few years Abanindranath and his group remained involved in soft nostalgic water-colour painting towards the restoration of an ancient heritage. Between 1915 to 1918, Abanindranath painted his famous animal series and illustrations to *Gitanjali.* Whether depicting the dream world of the fairies and romances in sensitive poses and gestures, "lending piquancy to the figures," or showing more familiar subjects observed from life, the charming and poetic paintings of Bengal masters are characterized by mannerism, pronounced by the usage of standard costume, hair-do, jewellery, and the handsome physical frames of the figures. What was important in the period is that the Neo-Bengal School under Abanindranath became an inspirational force for artists across the country till the foundation of Kalabhavan in Santiniketan.

The Indian Society of Oriental Art, the forum of the Neo-Bengal School of Art, was in the meantime busy holding exhibitions of Indian art in general and the art of Bengal in particular, in different parts of India and abroad. The appreciation of the critics knew no

bounds, "the direction in which the pictures will influence the art of the world will be upward," they pronounced. The world-wide acknowledgement of the school was confirmed.

In the wake of the mass movement of Gandhiji, a new phase started during 1920-30. A genuine and sincere artist, Abanindranath himself was not totally complacent about the current art situation, because the climate of the country was changing. Thus in spite of being a romantic, Abanindranath during and after 1930, made changes in the style, especially in the treatment of line, colour, and in the creation of space. The paintings of this period such as the Arabian Nights series, Kavi Kankan Chandi, and Krishna Mangal, reveal a brand of experimentation with regard to composition, light, colour and line, resulting in a construction of the composition which is solid, giving an almost architectonic character. In the use of light and thereby creating the mood, there was a change. The themes presented in these reliefs are no longer hidden under a diffused glow of light and shade; they fully and directly emerge on the surface with a definite message. This period of transition shows a change in the painting style of Abanindranath—from the unreal to the real, from the formless to form. *Zebunnesa*, one of the master paintings, has been rendered with a unique strength, which had been totally absent in the earlier paintings of the master.

12. *Finale.* Wash by Samarendranath Gupta. 22.86 x 17.78 cm. Private Collection. An expression of poetic emotion in terms of diffused colour and modelled line. Despite being a follower of Abanindranath, the originality of the artist is evident.

13. *The Grief of Uma* by Nandalal Bose. 1919-20. 22.2 x 13.2 cm. This painting shows how greatly the painter is indebted to the classical Indian style of painting. The tonal effect is soft, and the landscape merges with the figures.

When the attitude of the guru had taken recourse "to a technique, which is vital and effective like the tradition itself," his followers also began to experiment. The paintings such as *Svarna kumbha, Savarir Pratiksha* (1939-40) by Nandalal, show an immense solidity by infusing sculptural strength of composition, a trait which was far removed from his early style. Asit Haldar, another faithful follower chose allegorical painting. Sailendranath Dey followed Abanindranath fully, but in the Meghdoot series, which is acclaimed to be the masterpiece of this painter, he used a sort of simplification—almost to an extreme, which was quite unlike the style of Abanindranath.

Samarendranath Gupta's works show a shuttling between two influences, "either in the pursuit of the tradition or in terms of intellectual expression." The Neo-Bengal School at this stage took a different direction from the earlier nationalist art, with all its woolly revivalism.

The latter half of the thirties witnessed, "the threat of Fascism, and the need to meet it with [a] progressive artists' front." This brought a remarkable change in the artistic perception of the "new" Bengal artists. The Bengal masters faced reality for the first time and hence the dream world of the past could no longer hold them together. The artists at this stage aspired to be more Indian in spirit than to be part of the so-called nationalist school. As the social and political revolution gathered momentum, the psychological and sociological needs of the art were much too different. In this changed situation the style advocated by Acharya Abanindranath could no longer be the guiding principle. There was a necessity for change in both attitude and art ideation. The Bengal masters of painting at this stage moving from one change to another showed a tremendous striving to liberate themselves from vapoury nationalism in their art. The artists were in search of the basic truth underlying genuine creation. In going through this process, they did not actually deny the "Indianness" of the Neo-Bengal phase, instead the artists who were already a part of this school, attempted to improve their base imbibing inspiration from the universal language of art. By the 1940s, the mystified "Indianness" and its variants shattered into pieces. The artists moved forward to establish social relations existing between the artists and the community, and tried to be more responsive to one another. Quite naturally the artists were after a new aesthetic model, which would inspire human beings of all castes and classes against human bondage. In this changed situation, the artist and his patron went around the world with eyes open to assimilate the achievements of mankind in the field of aesthetics. In this context one is reminded of Rabindranath saying, "winds of art never blew in India, and thus it was impossible to get all sustenance needed for art from the soil." Needless to say such internationalism in no less a person than Rabindranath—himself a great exponent of the Neo-Bengal School, brought a remarkable change in the attitude among the artists belonging to this cadre. The Neo-Bengal School took an important step in this direction. Art of this period became "a vortex of the new currents and cross currents." Here lay the importance of the foundation of Kalabhavan at Santiniketan under Nandalal, who himself was the oldest pupil of Abanindranath. Rabindranath took the responsibility of setting up the school, not to re-create ancient traditions but to bring art to the service of mankind. The focal point of the contemporary art movement now shifted to Santiniketan, which temporarily replaced Calcutta as the experimental centre for the search of the new aesthetics.

EXHIBITION PREVIEW

Calcutta City of Palaces

A British Library Exhibition to Commemorate the 300th Year Since Calcutta's Foundation

J. P. Losty

> August 24, 1690. This day at Sankraul ordered Capt. Brooke to come up with his Vessell to Chutanutte where we arrived about noon, but found ye place in a deplorable condition, nothing being left for our present accommodation & ye Rains falling day & night.

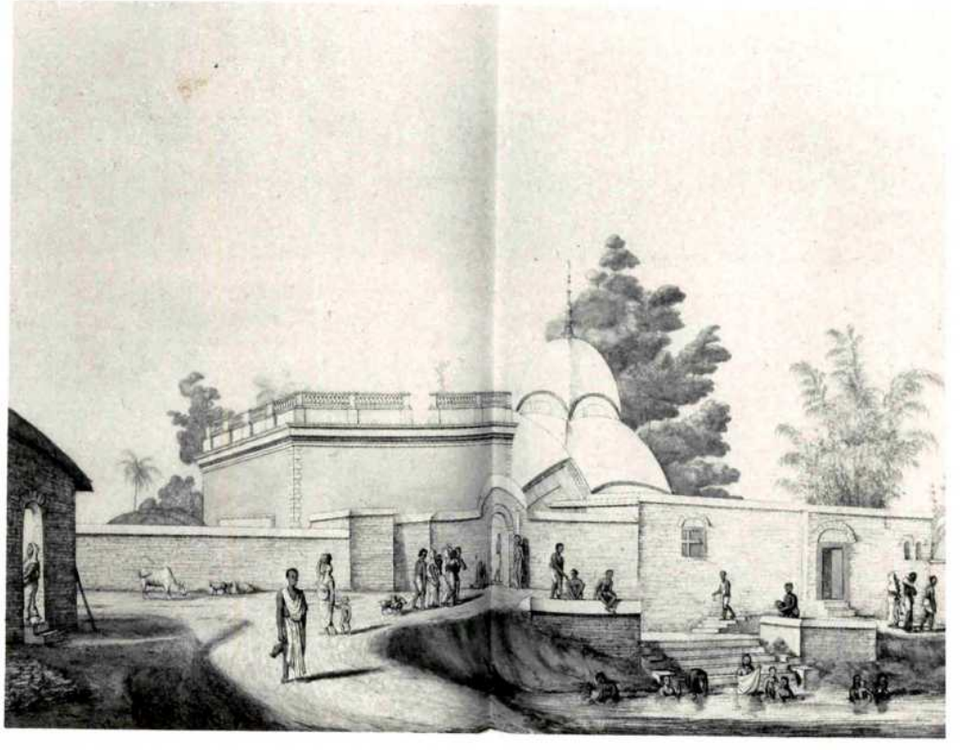
These are the first recorded words written at Calcutta, preserved in the Diary and Consultation Book kept by Job Charnock and the English factors in Bengal, and now part of the East India Company's records in the custody of The British Library. The Diary and other important documents of the early history of Calcutta will be on show in this exhibition.

For visual evidence of the appearance of the early settlement, there is nothing before the view painted about 1730 by George Lambert and Samuel Scott, as part of a set of six views of the Company's Eastern settlements, decorating the Directors' Courtroom in London (figure 1). This imposing oil-painting shows the factory building ("the best and most regular piece of architecture that ever I saw in India," according to Alexander Hamilton) from across the river, and is the source of the well-known engravings by Kirkall and Vandergucht published in 1735 and 1736, and even of Van Ryne's pastiche view of 1754. The building and the church of St Anne behind it, were destroyed when Nawab Siraj ud-Daula captured Calcutta in June 1756.

The rebuilt city is of course well known from the sets of views published by the Daniells in 1786-88 and again in 1797, and by William Baillie in 1794. Not so well known is the group of eight views of Calcutta included by F. B. Solvyns in his monumental set of *250 Coloured Etchings of the Hindoos* published in Calcutta in 1799 and again in Paris in 1808-12. The most interesting view here, is of the old Kalighat temple (figure 2) before it was pulled down and rebuilt about 1809.

There are many references to the "palaces" of Calcutta in late eighteenth-century literature—referring to the grand official and private houses which surrounded the Maidan on the north and east, forming a backdrop to the new Fort William. As newcomers to Calcutta rounded Garden Reach, they were rewarded with a dazzling view of white columns, porticoes, steeples, and domes set between the green of the Maidan and the blue sky. In Emma Roberts' words:

> The claims to architectural beauty of the City of Palaces have been questioned, and possibly there may be numberless faults to call forth the strictures of connoisseurs, but these are lost upon less erudite judges, who remain rapt in admira-



1. Old Fort William with the church of St Anne. Oil-painting by George Lambert and Samuel Scott. *c.* 1730. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London, F45.

2. Temple at Kalighat. Coloured etching by Francois Baltazard Solvyns, from his *Les Hindo* Paris, 1808-12. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

tion at the magnificence of the *coup d'oeil.*

The term "City of Palaces" seems to have been used for the first time by James Atkinson, in his poem of this title published in Calcutta in 1824:

But we here behold
A prodigy of power, transcending all
The conquests, and the governments, of old,
An empire of the Sun, a gorgeous realm of gold.

For us, in half a century, India blooms
The garden of Hesperides, and we
Placed in its porch, Calcutta, with its tombs
And dazzling splendors, towering peerlessly . . .

I stood a wondering stranger at the *Ghaut,*
And, gazing round, beheld the pomp of spires

3. View up Old Court House Street. Oil-painting attributed to James Baillie Fraser. 1819. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London, F851.

4. Government House from the East, with the Marquess of Hastings in his carriage. Coloured aquatint after James Baillie Fraser, from his *24 Views of Calcutta,* London, 1824-26. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

5. Esplanade Row East, from Chowringhee Road. Coloured lithograph, after Sir Charles D'Oyly, from his *Views of Calcutta and its Environs,* London, 1848. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

6. *Calcutta from the Old Course.* Coloured lithograph, after Sir Charles D'Oyly, from his *Views of Calcutta,* London, 1848. India Office Library and Records, The British Library, London.

> And palaces, to view like magic brought
> All glittering in the sun-beam . . .

These poetical sentiments were echoed by the amateur artists of the day, men such as James Fraser and Charles D'Oyly, whose views of the city were published in dazzling colour in London. In Fraser's views (figures 3, 4), sketched only a few years before Atkinson's poem, we see with brilliant clarity the palaces Atkinson describes. Yet in D'Oyly's views of the 1830s (not published until 1848), the clarity has been replaced by a misty beauty (figures 5, 6), which has an almost autumnal feeling of regret and yearning in it. This difference may be explained by the change in printing technique from aquatint to coloured lithography, yet, in between, there had occurred the great commercial collapse of 1830, which changed the tone of Calcutta society and ended forever "those immense subscriptions, those public tables, those costly entertainments and equipages . . . The mode of living is now exceedingly quiet and modest" (Macaulay's Letters).

This exhibition concentrates on Calcutta in the days of the East India Company, drawing on the resources of the India Office Library and Records, and of The British Library. It illustrates the layout and appearance of the city with plans and views, but also brings it to life with portraits of its inhabitants, and pictures illustrating the way they lived—their houses, servants and equipages, their interests and amusements, ranging from The Asiatic Society and the Botanical Gardens to the Chowringhee Theatre and the Racecourse. Shedding light on it all are William Hickey and the numerous inhabitants and visitors who committed their opinions and prejudices to writing. Accompanying the exhibition is a book concentrating on the development of the city as viewed by its artists: *Calcutta City of Palaces* by J. P. Losty, published by The British Library, London, and by Arnold Publishers, New Delhi. The exhibition will be held at The British Library, London, between June 22 and September 30, 1990.

NOTE

Mysore School of Traditional Painting

Sivapriyananda

Introduction

The history of the Mysore school of painting begins in the second half of the sixteenth century. Artists and craftsmen who had worked for generations in Vijayanagara became homeless after the fall of that great empire. Many migrated southwards in search of employment in the courts of the numerous small Hindu kingdoms. A large number of these migrating artists were rehabilitated and employed by Raja Wodeyar (1578-1617), the first powerful ruler of the rising Wodeyar dynasty of Mysore. We know from literary sources[1] that a sizeable area in the fortified island town of Srirangapatna—fifteen kilometres north of Mysore—was set aside to house artists and their families. A temple dedicated to the goddess Nimishamba, the family deity of the Chandravamshi Kshatriya Raju community to which most of the artists belonged, still stands on the banks of the Kaveri near Srirangapatna.[2] Unfortunately, very little is known of this early phase of Mysore painting as no examples of any significance have survived the centuries of warfare, neglect, and vandalism. But one can safely presume that this early style of painting closely followed the Vijayanagara idiom, perhaps with minor changes to suit the taste and culture of the new patrons.

The Mysore traditional style was revived in the early nineteenth century, and it evolved and flourished under the generous patronage and personal encouragement of Mummadi (third) Krishnaraja Wodeyar.

In 1799, Tipu Sultan was defeated and killed by the British and the kingdom was restored to the Wodeyar dynasty. Five-year-old Krishnaraja was crowned king and the capital of the state was shifted to Mysore from Srirangapatna. As the king was still a child, the kingdom was jointly administered by the able Divan Purnaiah and a British Resident. In 1811, at the age of sixteen, Mummadi Krishnaraja took over the administration and ruled efficiently for twenty years. But unrest and insurrection in some parts of the state gave the British an excuse to take over the administration from the king in 1831.

Deprived of all administrative responsibilities, Krishnaraja turned to religious, literary, and artistic pursuits. He encouraged poets, scholars, musicians, and artists; his liberal patronage attracted some of the finest talent of the time to his court. The king himself was an artist and a poet, and could compose verses in Kannada, Sanskrit, and Persian.[3]

Style of Painting

The Mysore school of traditional painting which developed during the rule of Mummadi Krishnaraja can be broadly divided into three main styles. The early style which is basically a mural style was used mostly for murals and paintings done on cloth and wooden boards. This style generally followed the late

1

1. Mural of Vishnu, Indra, and other gods at Siva's wedding. Mallikarjunasvami Temple. Mudukutore (Mysore district).

2. Mural in the Jain Charukirti-panditacharya Matha. Sravana Belgola (Hassan district).

Vijayanagara (Uchhayappa matha, Anegundi) idiom. The surface of the painting was divided into horizontal and vertical compartments of various sizes into which were painted scenes from mythology and legend. The upper portion of these compartments was decorated either with a "lotus petal-garland-festoons" pattern or with elevations of temple *vimanas* and *gopuras.* Inscriptions describing the scenes were placed near the lower border. Colours were saturated and primary: red, yellow, and blue, with the occasional use of green. Pigments were laid flat without much mixing, though at times an attempt was made to show volume by shading the faces, bodies, and costumes with a darker shade, or black. Backgrounds were almost always monochrome. Delicate and clear dark outlines generally dominated over colour. The faces and feet of the majority of the human figures were in profile, though their bodies appeared frontal. Representations of gods and goddesses in hieratic poses were fully frontal—facing the viewer. Costumes, ornaments, and attributes (*ayudhas* and *mudras*) of these sacred figures were placed symmetrically on either side of a central axis (*madhyasutra*) following the ancient *Silpasastra* tradition. The poses of most figures were stylized, and movement suggested by the fanning out and flying ends of garments and flower garlands. The angle of crowded scenes was always multi-dimensional so that figures inside and outside a building could be seen simultaneously. Some of the best examples of this early style can be seen in the murals of the marriage pavilion, Mallikarjunasvami Temple (figure 1) at Mudukutore (Mysore district), Charukirti-panditacharya Matha (figure 2) at Sravana Belgola (Hassan district) and the Chitramandapa of the Prasanna Venkatasvami temple at Mysore city, as well as in the large cloth painting of Chamundeshvari-Siva iconography (figures 3,4) in the Sri Jayachamarajendra Art Gallery, Jaganmohan Palace, Mysore.

The middle or manuscript style probably evolved during the second half of the nineteenth century, a period when the king had already retired from active administration and devoted his energies to cultural matters. The most representative examples of this style are the illustrated manuscripts of the great cultural encyclopaedia *Sritattvanidhi,* (figure 5) compiled and illustrated under the personal supervision and guidance of Mummadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar.

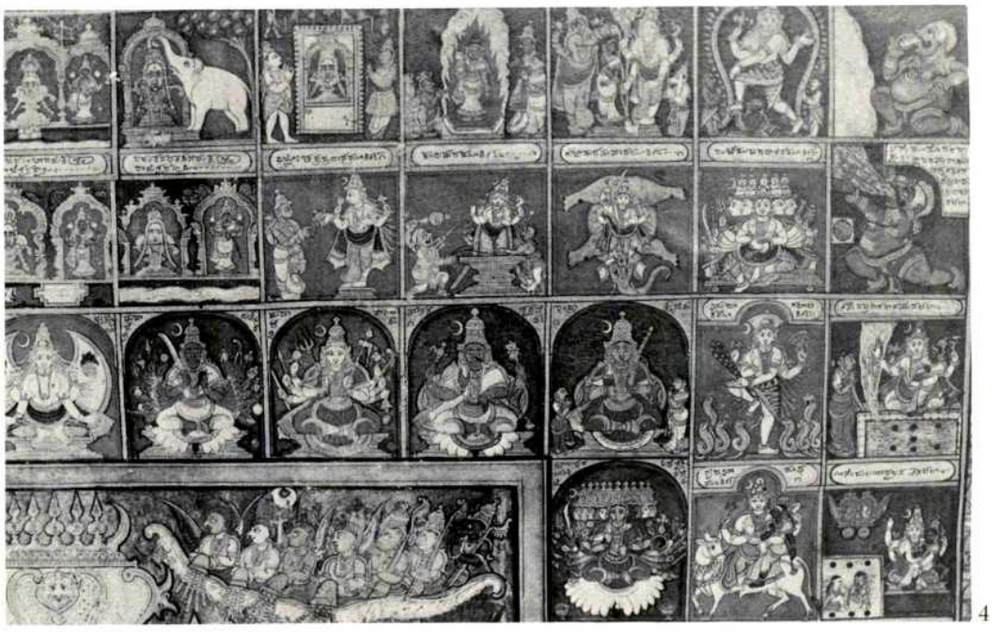
All the three known manuscripts of *Sritattvanidhi* have more than two thousand illustrations each, done in water-colour on imported paper.[4] The backgrounds are generally left unpainted, but faces, drapery folds, building facades, palace interiors, trees, and hills are shaded in darker tones using quick colour washes. All the figures are finished in very fine and flowing black outlines. Colours are limited to red, yellow, blue, and dark green with an occasional touch of gold. Though the overall effect of these illustrations is that of diagrams, the forms, proportions and methods of representing deities became the prototype for all later Mysore paintings.

A more colourful and ornate, but slightly later version of the manuscript style can be seen in the Kannada *Ramayana-Sundarkanda* manuscript, (figure 6) in the Mysore Palace Sarasvati Bhandar Library. This style seems to have been influenced by Rajasthani or Deccani miniatures, elements of which may be seen very clearly in the formation of trees and flowering shrubs.

The late Mysore style (figure 7) shows many innovations influenced by an increasing familiarity with European paintings and prints, photography,[5] and the availability of paper and new factory-made pigments. Instead of narrative scenes done in horizontal bands against plain backgrounds, artists painted intimate groups of gods and goddesses within decorative niches and ornate arches, in the manner of formal portraits. Outdoor scenes were set against a deep blue sky above, and naturalistic hills, trees, lakes, rocks, and flowering plants below the principal figures. Episodes in continuous narrative scenes were divided not by formal borders, but by the use of realistic scenic or architectural elements. In most of these paintings, the multi-dimensional viewpoint was dropped.

Many new and bright colours, such as vermilion from mercury sulfide, crimson from the cochineal insect, emerald green from copper acetoarsenic and synthetic ultramarine, were added to the traditional palette. Also, the use of gold leaf and gesso work became common. Familiarity with photographs induced many traditional artists to shade faces and textile folds to make them appear realistic. Washes of graded shades, darker near the outline and getting gradually lighter inwards, were painted as shadows under the eyebrows, eyes, nose, lips, chin, and other exposed parts of the body, to suggest volume and make them resemble the fleshy oval faces of the old nobility as seen in numerous sepia photographs. High areas were either left unpainted or accentuated with washes of white to show highlight. A similar technique was used to shade textile folds. Along with these innovations, many of the traditional decorative elements, such as plenty of jewellery, intricate textile patterns, flying cloth ends and garlands, and symmetrically placed attributes were all retained. Most of the Mysore paintings that decorate old homes and *bhajan* halls in and around Mysore city are examples of this late mixed style.

From the late mixed style, there evolved a rather eclectic and hybrid style, during the reign of Chamarajendra IX (1881-94) and Nalvadi (fourth) Krishnaraja Wodeyar (1902-40). This style attempted a synthesis between the increasing use of Western-style photographic realism and traditional decorative elements. Even the use of new materials such as oil paints and canvas for portraits and mythological subjects became quite common (figure 8). The Sri Jayachamarajendra Art Gallery in Mysore has many such eclectic paintings.



3. Chamundeshvari-Siva iconography (detail). Cloth painting. Sri Jayachamarajendra Art Gallery, Mysore.

4. Chamundeshvari-Siva iconography (detail). Cloth painting. Sri Jayachamarajendra Art Gallery, Mysore.

5. Nataraja (Tandava) from the *Sritattvanidhi.* Manuscript style. Mysore Palace Sarasvati Bhandar Library.

6. Rama and Anjaneya from the *Ramayana-Sundarkanda.* Manuscript style. Mysore Palace Sarasvati Bhandar Library.

7. Sri Vitthala. Late Mysore style showing Western influence in modelling. Collection of Sivapriyananda.

8. Siva giving the Pashupatastra to Arjuna from the *Kiratarjuniya* (detail). Late style showing naturalistic background. Collection of Sri M. C. Ramaswamy, Mysore.

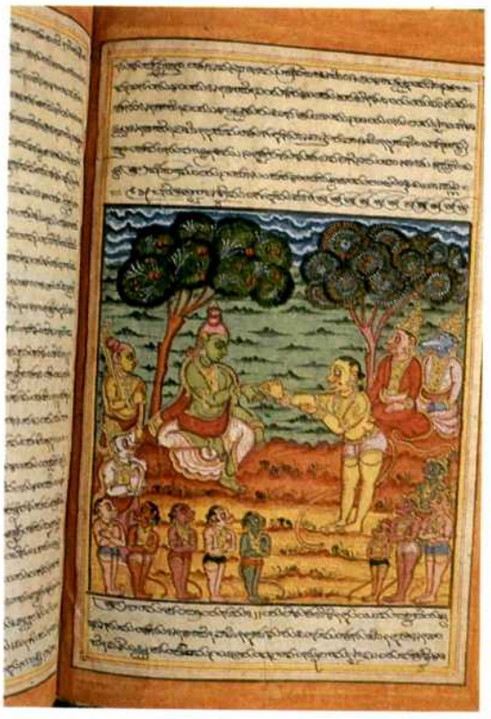
Technique and Materials

During the early period, larger paintings were done on cotton cloth pasted on a wooden board and primed with a mixture of white lead, gum arabic, copper sulphate, and rice gruel (*ganji*). The primed cloth board was then dried in the sun and burnished like paper. Only rarely were wooden boards, primed with lead carbonate, yellow ochre, and gum used.

Manuscript paintings were done directly on superior quality paper after a little burnishing.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, paintings were generally done on thin white paper, stuck with gum arabic on several layers of waste- or newspaper. The surface was primed with white lead and gum arabic and smoothened with a flat burnishing stone called *kulupada kallu.* Late hybrid style paintings were done on canvas, glass, ivory, and even stained glass.

Once the ground was prepared, a rough sketch was drawn with charred tamarind twigs or pieces of charcoal. Popular themes were traced using perforated stencils. The figures on the stencil were transferred by dusting with charcoal powder. The resulting outline was reworked with red ochre (*kavi banna*) using a sharpened stick or a very fine brush. The background and other large areas were coloured first, after which the faces and other exposed parts of the body, as well as textiles, were filled in and shaded. Gesso was done at this stage. Finally, details such as textile patterns, jewellery, lips, fingernails, and eyes, were all delicately finished. Then gold leaf was cut into the required shapes and stuck onto the raised gesso areas. Last of all, the eyes were ritually opened (*netronmilana*) by painting in the pupils. Some artists followed a slightly different routine in colouring. They filled in and shaded the



7

faces of the principal figures before working on the background.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, Mysore artists used natural mineral or organic pigments. These were mixed with a binder such as gum arabic. Frequently, mineral colours were thickened with a white filler—often lead carbonate (*safeda*). All these pigments were carefully mixed by the artist himself or by his apprentice.

The palette included primary colours: red ochre or *kavi* (hydrous ferric oxide), yellow ochre or *gopi* (hydrated ferric oxide), chrome yellow or *haladi* (turmeric from the *Curcuma longa* plant), and blue or *neeli* (indigo from *Indigofera tinctoria*). Secondary colours such as orange and green were either mixed or derived: from red lead (lead tetraoxide) for orange or *chandra*, and verdigris (basic cupric acetate) for green or *pacche*. From the later years of the nineteenth century, the Mysore traditional palette became more varied and bright with the introduction of factory-made synthetic pigments from Europe.

Before ready-made brushes came on the market, artists made their own brushes (*kuncha*). The usual method was to bundle the required number of hairs—hog or goat hair for larger brushes and squirrel hair for finer ones—bind them with strong silk threads and pass them through a hole made at one end of a quill. The quill was then stuck onto a good quality flexible wooden stick either of bamboo or tamarind.

Subjects of Mysore paintings were predominantly religious and mythological, depicting scenes from the epics and *Puranas*, as well as icons of popular gods and goddesses. At a later stage portraits became fashionable and very accurate likenesses of the members of the royal family, Divans, important officials and rich patrons, and even famous artists, are known from private collections.

Most of the finest paintings were done by artists living and working in Mysore city and Srirangapatna. But there were other recognized centres such as Nanjangud, Melukote, Shimoga, Bangalore, Tumkur, Nelamangala and Chitradurga where a slightly variant provincial style was practised.[6]

Conclusion

The distinctive and refined school of Mysore paintings can be divided into three broad styles: early, manuscript, and late. Though these three styles are clearly defined and identifiable, they are flexible, and there is a great deal of intermixing of stylistic elements. Also, they are not strictly chronological, and mural style paintings dating from the early twentieth century are not unknown.

NOTES

1. Govinda Bhatta, "Kanthirava Narasaraja Vijayam" (in Kannada), *Mysore Oriental Library Kannada Series*, No. 14 (Mysore: Oriental Research Institute, University of Mysore, n.d.).
2. S. R. Rao and B. V. K. Sastry, *Traditional Paintings of Karnataka* (Bangalore: Karnataka Chitrakala Parishat, 1980), pp. 19-20.
3. Phalaksha, *Political and Cultural History of Karnataka* (Tiptur: Shashi Prakashana, 1989), pp. 329-34.
4. Santoshkumar Gulvadi, "Karnatakada Svaramala, Ragamala, Talamala Chitrakale" (in Kannada), *Udayavani, Deepavali Visheshanka* (Manipal 1981), pp. 19-39.
5. Joseph M. Dye III, "A Painting of 'Kiratarjuniyam' from Mysore," A IV, *Arts in Virginia*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (1983-84): 11-29.
6. Ibid., pp. 28-29, note 4.

BOOK REVIEWS

Title	: **Dogra Wall Paintings in Jammu and Kashmir**
Writer	: Mira Seth
Publisher	: Oxford University Press, Delhi (1987)
Format	: 28.5 x 22 cm.; viii + 59 pages, 53 colour and 180 black and white illustrations
Price	: Rs. 400.00

In recent years, the study of Indian miniature and manuscript painting has steadily progressed: period and regional styles have been defined; individual artist's hands isolated; and patronage patterns identified. Unfortunately, the same attention has not been lavished on Indian wall-painting of the seventeenth-nineteenth centuries: these murals often lie in remote places; they are usually difficult to photograph; and many of them belong to periods or schools regarded as somewhat *outré* by conventional art historians. The failure to document these works is particularly regrettable, because some of them are deteriorating so rapidly that they will soon be lost forever.

Given this set of circumstances, Mira Seth's new study, *Dogra Wall Paintings in Jammu and Kashmir,* is truly a welcome contribution. Seth's book documents and analyzes murals painted from about 1832-90 in the palaces and temples of Jammu, Punch, and Ramnagar—the three capitals of the Dogra brothers (Gulab Singh, Dhian Singh, and Suchet Singh) and their successors. The first chapter details the historical, sociological, and religious context of the paintings. The second exhaustively describes each group of murals, and the third analyzes them in terms of style, technique, and theme. The fourth and final chapter relates the Dogra wall-paintings to Indian murals and miniatures of other regions and periods. Numerous colour plates and black and white photographs not only illustrate the text, but also provide the first extensive photographic documentation of many of these murals.

Seth's discussion is extensive and meticulous. She presents an extraordinary amount of material, much of it new and important, in a systematic, highly organized fashion. Her analysis of the nineteenth-century Dogra style in Chapter Three is trenchant and stimulating. Even when presenting relatively routine information (regional and dynastic history), the writer manages to say something interesting: her first chapter, for instance, includes fascinating observations on the role of women as patrons of painting in Jammu and Kashmir.

If the text suffers from any major weakness, it is in its over-abundance of secondary and tertiary detail. Following her minutiae-filled, fact-bound arguments is sometimes akin to pursuing an elusive animal through a thick and endless jungle. So numerous are these details that they clutter the text, obscuring the larger and more intriguing ideas: some of these fine points belong in footnotes; others in appendices; and still others should be eliminated altogether. The second chapter's lengthy descriptions of the murals might well have been clarified by adding ground-plans and wall elevations keyed to charts locating each painting within its architectural setting.

Several aspects of the subject probably merit more attention than is given to them in the book. The Dogra murals, regardless of date or artist, do share many basic aesthetic characteristics which have been admirably defined by the writer. A glance at the illustrations in the book, however, suggests that though closely interrelated, these wall-paintings are done by different hands in slightly varied modes ranging from the folkish to the courtly: the murals in the Raghunathji temple at Bhurj or in the Ramnagar Palace, for example, are more polished and sophisticated than some of those in the Radhakrishna Temple at Miran Sahib; many of the paintings at the Raghunathji Mandir at Mule Chak are rendered in a highly individual manner when compared with others. While these differences are usually mentioned by little attempt is made to account for them, or to explore broader significance. No doubt various combinations of chron individual artistic talent, and levels of patronage could e the fluctuating mixture of courtly and folkish modes fou nineteenth-century Dogra wall-paintings. Even if conclusive ar are not possible now, these crucial issues should be laid ou discussed thoroughly.

A somewhat similar criticism applies to Seth's analysis relationship between the Dogra murals and other types of painting. At times, comparisons are presented that lead nov for example, between the murals of Alchi and those of ninet century Jammu and Kashmir. In other cases, highly imp relationships are mentioned but not given adequate atte The discussion of the relationship between Dogra miniatu wall-paintings, for example, does not fully address man issues. What are the specific similarities and differences be the murals and miniatures of Jammu and Kashmir? Ar compositions of the wall-paintings borrowed from minia Do the murals enable us to determine more specific informat the dates and provenance of miniature paintings? The writer t on some of these issues, but her astute observations are often restricted.

These relatively minor criticisms are not meant to detract way from Seth's pioneering achievements. Her book is piece of work. One wishes that there were more scholars of painting like Mira Seth. She has willingly faced the haza physically demanding field-work, and the complexities of expl her subject with care and devotion. We eagerly await her contributions, which, if they meet the high standards set l book, will no doubt, introduce us to many new facets of the l of Indian art.

Joseph M. D

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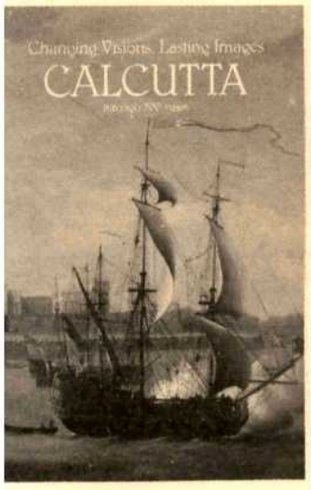

Changing Visions, Lasting Images
CALCUTTA through 300 years
pp. 172 + xvi

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Title	:	**Kashmir, Garden of the Himalayas**
Writer	:	Raghubir Singh
Publisher	:	R. V. Pandit for the Perennial Press, Hong Kong, 1983
Format	:	31 x 26.5 cm.; 80 colour photographs
Price	:	Rs. 280.00

Kashmir's scenic beauty has attracted all types of artists through the ages. It is not, therefore, an unusual subject for the well-known photographer, Raghubir Singh, to choose. His book, *Kashmir, Garden of the Himalayas*, is a compilation of eighty colour plates and twelve pages of text, comprising the Preface, Introduction, and list of captions.

Because Kashmir is naturally picturesque and very often captured by the camera, photographers are hard-pressed to present angles that have not been explored. Singh failed to take on this challenge and the result is a collection of stock shots with an air of *déjà vu* about them. There are notable exceptions: the migration of a herd of goats, a fallen horse, and a charming study of an old man and his grandson. The images are presented randomly—there is no focal point or logical thread binding them. They do not even represent all of the region. Some places feature more than once, others are ignored. The few photogenic "rural" locales are perhaps in keeping with the garden theme, but nowhere is the presence of the Himalayan backdrop well exploited. Also, except for the back cover, there are no winter scenes—in a place famous for its snowy beauty. The book might have been titled "The Urban People of Kashmir," rather than *Kashmir, Garden of the Himalayas*, considering the number of pictures of human activity in Srinagar that Singh has included. Though the Introduction indicates that Singh traversed Kashmir, almost half the pictures in the book were taken in the capital city.

The photographer's arbitrary perception and presentation could be overlooked, even welcomed, if each image left an impression on the mind or heart. This does not happen for several reasons. First, and most important, Singh has not experimented with his medium, whether in shooting or processing. In contrast, Mirella Ricciardi's *Vanishing Tribes of Africa*, and *The Himalayas* by Yoshikazu Shirakawa demonstrate innovative usage of both camera and film. In *Kashmir*, there are well-composed photographs of textile merchants in Zaina Kadal, the Gujars of Sind Valley, Naulora village, and of farmers near Sopore. A perspective on pilgrims *en route* to the Amarnath cave is dramatic. But even these arresting shots suffer, because the quality of most of the reproductions is poor. Murky light, reduces "paradise" to a netherworld in a number of plates. Dark areas of the photographs appear unidimensional and it is difficult to distinguish details. Singh advocates soft lighting because he believes it reveals, while strong light "makes us blink and close our eyes." But his penchant for muted light is not effective; in fact it is a strain on the eye—as are the colours. All too often, they are garish, with no subtlety of shades. If this is due to an inferior quality of reproduction, it is unforgivable, considering that the book has been printed in Japan.

A word on the captions. Though Singh mentions, in the Introduction, the times he visited Kashmir, it would be of interest to know, just for the record, when each photograph was taken. Locations are specified in the captions but some areas are not marked on the map provided at the beginning of the book. The map is a thoughtful addition but it should have been comprehensive to be of value. Also, I feel captions should be alongside photographs rather than relegated to a separate list. Unless the visuals are placed in an artistic format or cover the entire page, it is more convenient to read captions when they are on the same page as the illustrations. On the other hand, not everyone is keen on looking up captions. Unfortunately for those who prefer to enjoy aesthetics without information clutter, this book is unsatisfying for the reasons explained earlier.

Ironically, Raghubir Singh's writing is more gripping than his camera work. The Introduction is worth reading. His fascination with Kashmir is conveyed in a lively style:

> The spectacular sights, the sounds and the seasons had attached me to the life and landscape . . .

He covers a number of aspects: history and folk culture, crops and industry, religion and the Hindu-Muslim relationship, art and craft, even music and food! The historical review is well-researched and peppered with little-known details such as the woe of the Kashmiri shawl weavers when the French lost the 1870 Franco-Prussian war. Singh's sketches of life in Kashmir are vivid and evocative. A single picture is said to equal a thousand words, but in this case the photographer's words have more weight.

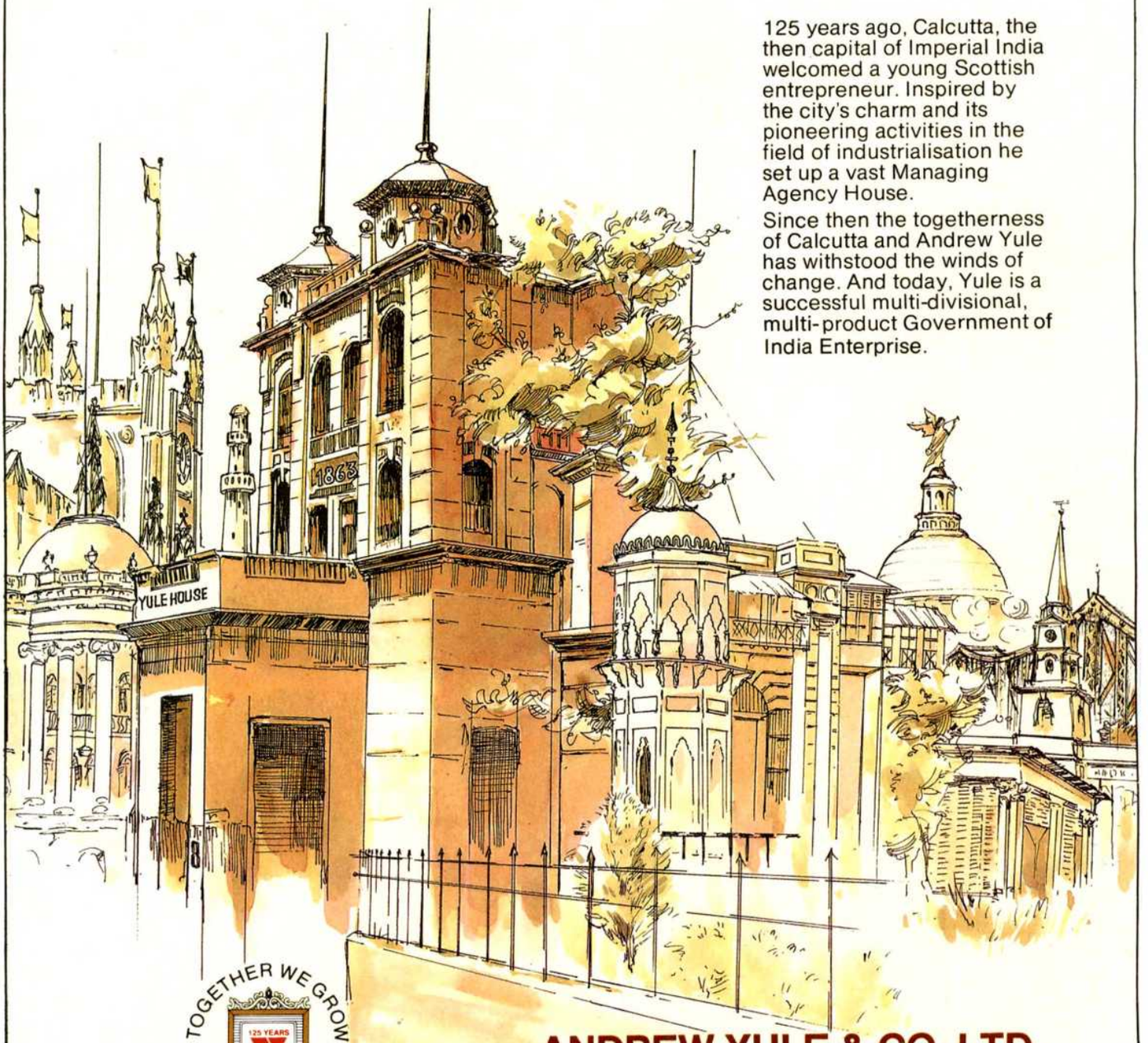
It was a good idea to feature the thoughts of a prominent Kashmiri as the Preface. Pandit Nehru's reminiscences of a visit to Kashmir after a long absence, add a dimension that echoes the photographer's emotions. Nehru said:

> I wanted to crowd as much of experience and sensations as I could during these few days, to fill the storehouse of my memory with a picture gallery . . .

Raghubir Singh is fortunate to be able to create real picture-galleries. One can only wish his performance, in this case, were less mediocre. Perhaps my disappointment was greater because my expectations were high; justifiably so considering this photographer's earlier work. Singh is said to have "visual intelligence and a seeing eye," and he himself states, "My books on Kashmir and Rajasthan are conceived and executed with the art of the book in mind." Perhaps next time his art will be more exciting.

Anuja P. Mahindra-Sharma

Andrew Yule salutes Calcutta, the "City of Joy" in its Tercentenary Year



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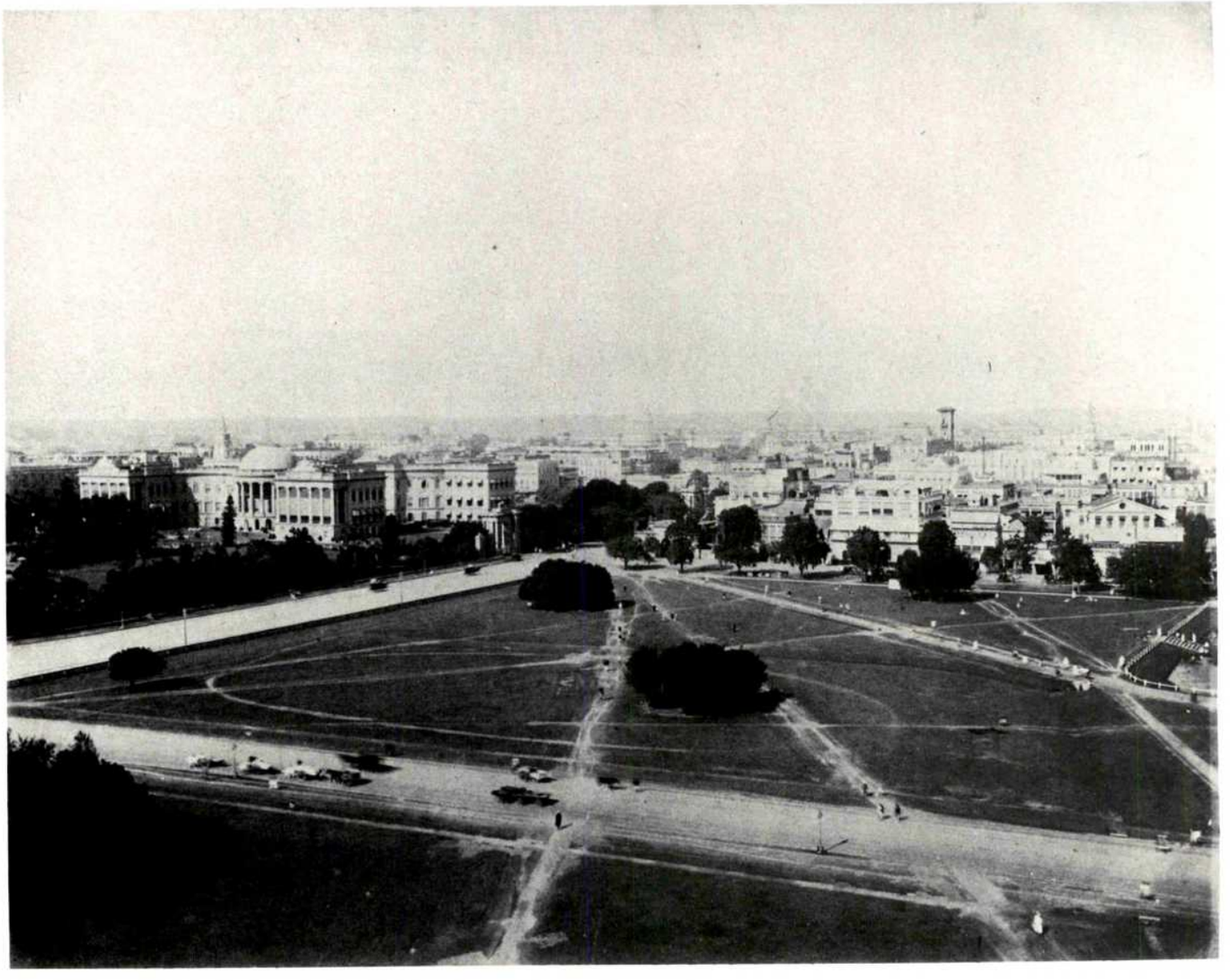

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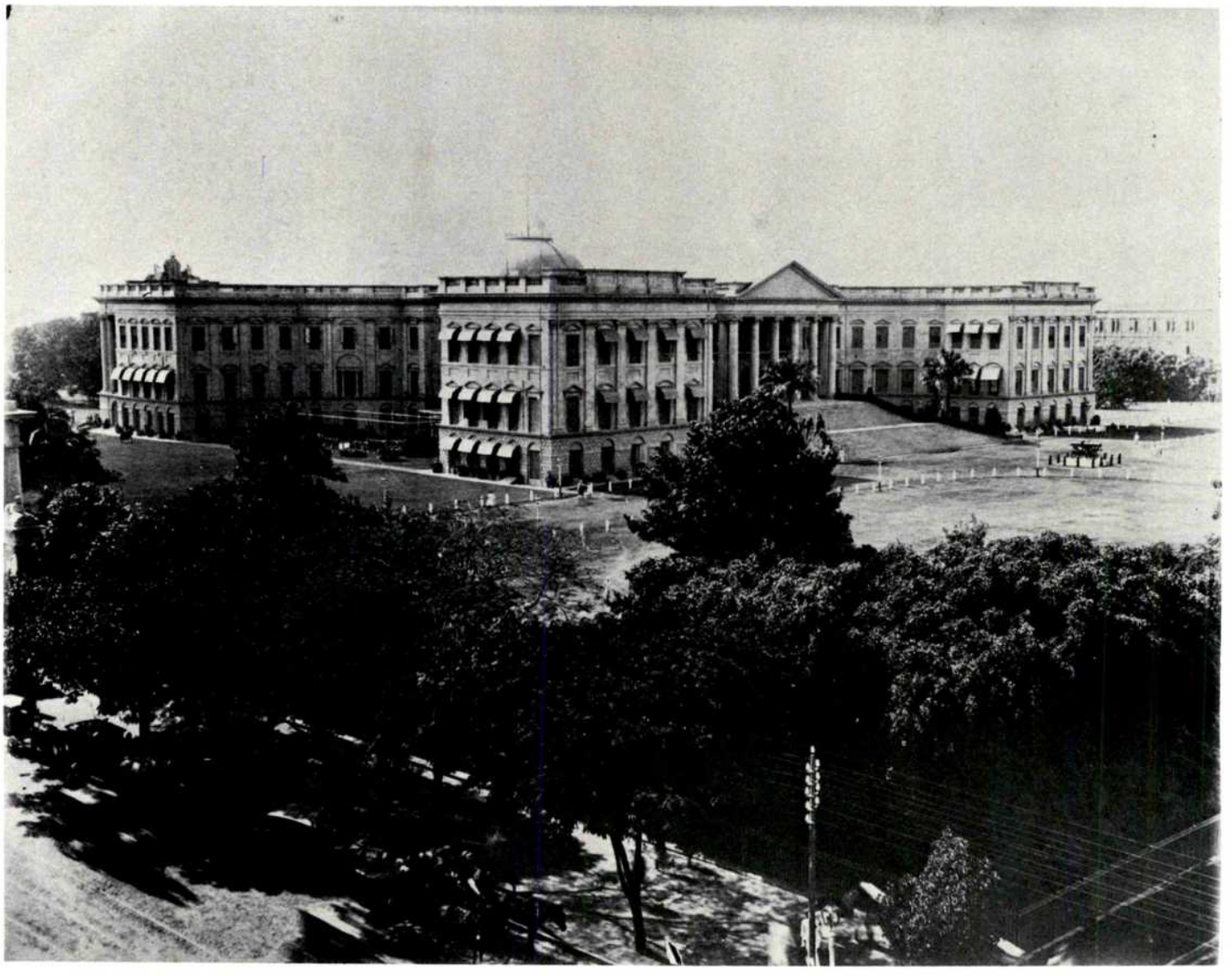

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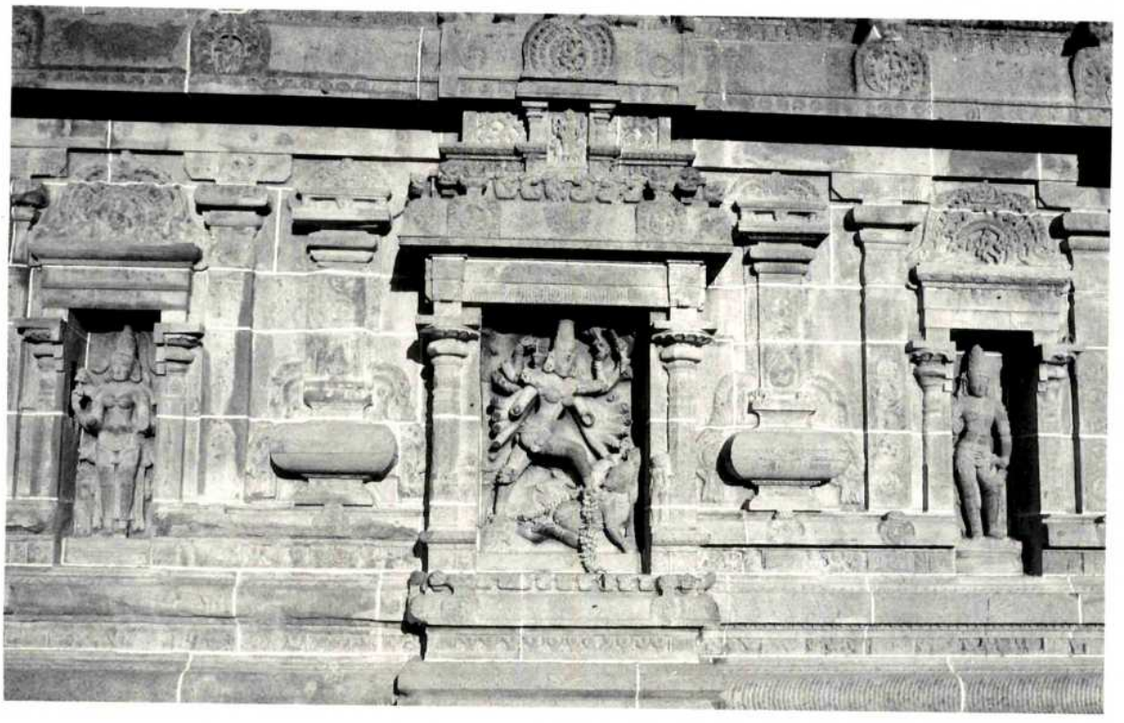

West Gopuram of the Nataraja Temple, Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, AD twelfth century. Discussed in the article, The work of the archaeological survey of India by Thomas Tuohy, APOLLO, September 1988. This issue also includes an important article on problems in early Chinese ceramics.

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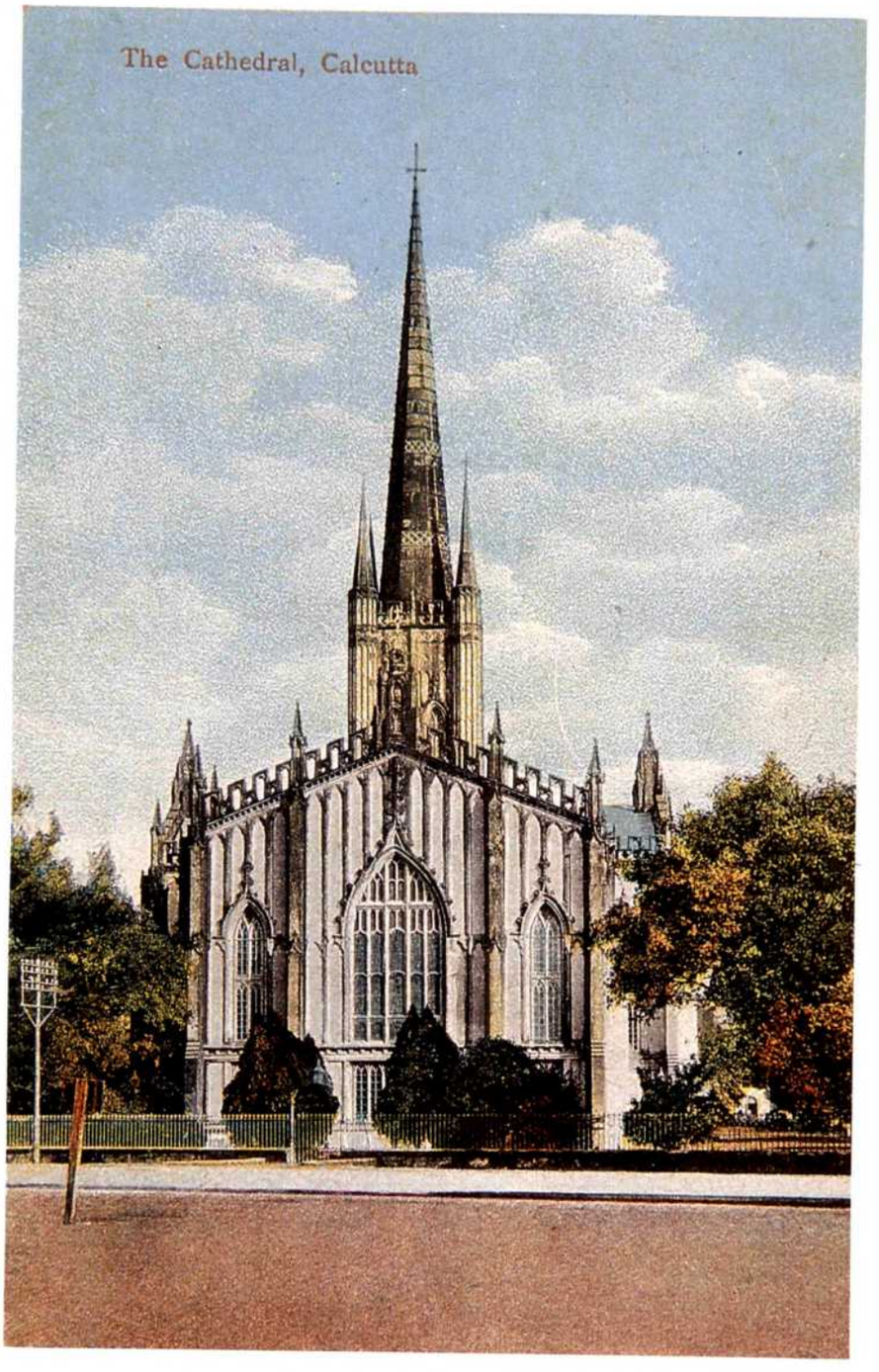

The Cathedral, Calcutta. c. 1910. Postcard. 14 *x* 9 *cm. Phillips Antiques, Bombay.*

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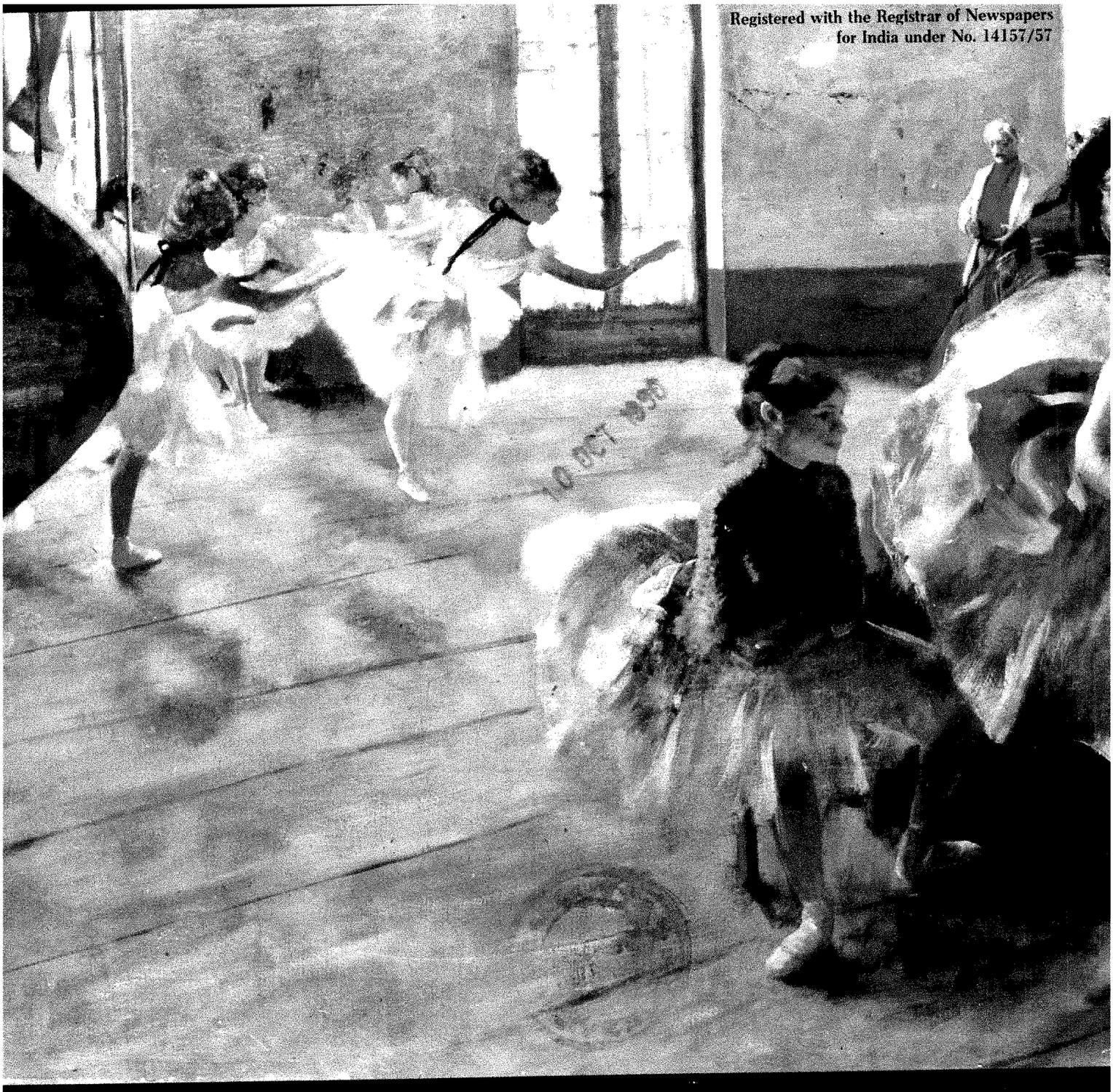

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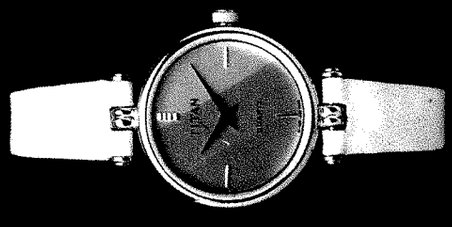

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